Thursday, December 16, 2010 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 26 / No. 8 P18 www.inquirer.net Mobile Alert: Text NO 2615 DEBANG to 4467

10 soldiers killed by rebels 2 days before ceasefire

By Rachel Arnaiz
Inquirer Visayas

CATARMAN, Northern Samar—Caramoanan rebels killed 10 Army soldiers in an encounter in a remote village in Las Navas town in this province on Tuesday, two days before a Christmas ceasefire.

A 9-year-old boy was killed in the crossfire, while two other soldiers were wounded, Capt. Demerth Cano, civil military operations officer of

10 SOLDIERS/A4

SPORTS

PH booters face host Indonesia tonight

LIFESTYLE

The night Manila thought it lost iconic landmark

BUSINESS

OFW remittances surge to $15.46B in October

ENTERTAINMENT

FPJ family ready for his National Artist award

P-Noy invites media for cheese, pan de sal

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT AQUINO, who used to have gatherings with reporters, makes a tempting offer to reporters. Come visit Malacañang for some cheese and pan de sal.

Mr. Aquino dropped by Tuesday night at the House of Representatives

P-NOY/A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

SC: Webb et al. not vindicated

Court didn't rule they are not guilty

By Marlon Ramos and Nikko Dizon

THE DECISION of the Supreme Court clearing Hubert Webb and six others of criminal liability in the 1991 Vizconde massacre is not a vindication of them, the tribunal's spokesperson said yesterday.

Speaking at a news briefing, Midas Marquez said the acquittal of Webb et al. did not mean they were innocent of the charges. He said the high court voted 7-6 to acquit them because of the prosecution's failure to prove their guilt beyond reasonable doubt and because of infirmities in the testimony of star witness Jessica Alfaro.

"The court said there was not enough 'basis to [affirm] the conviction of the accused. The court did not say they are not guilty," Marquez stressed.

"The magistrates did not say that they were innocent and that they did not commit the crime," he said.

Marquez also appealed for calm among critics of the high court's decision, saying, "It would be better" that they read

WEBB/A6

990 INTERVIEW Hubert Webb shows off his "Spanish" tattoo during Wednesday's interview on Radyo Inquirer 990 with program anchors Marc Tafalla and Reyzie Arnaldo.

'DIVINE JUSTICE' Lauro Vizconde breaks down before the tombs of his wife Estrellita, daughters Jennifer and Carmela at Holy Cross Memorial Park in Novaliches, Quezon City, on Wednesday.

Hubert: It really feels, smells like Christmas

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Volt Contreras

HE MAY be facing so many possibilities now that he is a free man but Hubert Webb is set to live one day at a time.

"I have many dreams and plans but I want to live in the now [and] that's what I've learned from all these," the 41-year-old Webb said in a brief interview with reporters yesterday at the lobby of a posh condominium, where his parents have been residing since 1996.

Webb had just come from a quiet afternoon nap, one of his many firsts since he walked out of the New Bilibid Prisons on Tuesday afternoon, when he talked with reporters yesterday.

"I had a good sleep—one of the best sleeps I had so far," he said. The smell of his mom's newly bought Christmas tree was also giving him comfort. "It brings back old memories. It really smells like Christ-

HUBERT/A6

Vizconde told there's divine justice

By Tarra Quismundo and Jocelyn R. Uy

NO WORDS had to be spoken.

Dressed in black, a grieving Lauro Vizconde visited the final resting place of his wife and daughters at sundown yesterday, shedding tears and tenderly touching the headstones.

His stood before the marble tombs at Holy Cross Memorial Park in Novaliches, Quezon City, staring with tears at each of the names inscribed on the new tarnished metal: Carmela, his eldest daughter, on the left; Estrellita, his wife, in the middle; and Jennifer, the younger child, on the right.

"I am truly saddened that I, my relatives, and most important, the people, failed to find justice," Vizconde later told reporters in Filipino. "It looks like justice is really elusive."

He cited a string of "coincidences" leading to the release of Webb et al.—information

VIZCONDE/A11

TELLING THE FILIPINO STORY TO THE WORLD

Editors' Note: For 25 days, we will be telling stories about the Inquirer to mark the paper's 25th anniversary on Dec. 8, 2010. Some are little inside stories but impacting on how we cover unfolding events; some are mark-the-day stories that become talk-of-the-town types; others are turning point stories that have changed the landscape of history; still others, big or small, seize the heart and never let go.

But whatever, the Inquirer will tell you the story.

25

Marcos told this reporter he had a mission from God

By Fernando del Mundo
Chief Inquirer Investigative Team

THE INQUIRER'S first issue 25 years ago carried on its front page one of the last interviews given by President Ferdinand Marcos three months before he fled a howling mob besieging Malacañang.

That was what he announced before an American audience in the US TV show "This week with David Brinkley" that he was calling a snap election on Feb. 7, 1986—a rigged exercise that sparked the People Power Revolution two weeks later and installed Corazon Aquino as President.

MARCOS/A13

'CRITICAL COLLABORATION' was how Jaime Cardinal Sin called his relationship with First Lady Imelda Marcos and President Marcos.

POWER PAIR Ferdinand and Imelda in their prime at the Palace

WikiLeaks: GMA good leader but for corruption

SYDNEY—A secret memo from the US Embassy in Beijing released by WikiLeaks and seen by the Inquirer described former President Macapagal-Arroyo as a "good leader" who was in control but that corruption was a "significant problem."

The reference to the Philippines in the memo was contained in two paragraphs and apparently was sent a few months before the $328-million NBN-ZTE deal with China was scuttled following allegations of corruption and bribery.

Top Australian diplomats described China as paranoid and

WIKILEAKS/A4

Cardinal Sin looked after Marcoses' safety

By Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Editor in Chief

THE MOST political prelate in the country's recent history, Jaime Cardinal Sin, passed away on June 21, 2005. But not the memory of how he mobilized the Edsa People Power Revolution that dismantled the Marcos dictatorship. Without firing a single shot. This was a people's revolution that was not unlike a procession of saints and a profession of faith, thanks to Cardinal Sin.

Over Radio Veritas, Cardinal Sin, at that time already one of Asia's prominent prelates for his outspoken views on social and political issues, called on the people to come to Edsa to provide a human shield for 250 officers and soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines led by then Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and Armed Forces Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos, who broke away from the iron grip of Ferdinand Marcos.

The cardinal's clarion call marked the start of the end of Ferdinand Marcos' 20-

CARDINAL/A13

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Cycle and Luzon shape off showers mostly cloudy skies off southeast provinces, with the rest of the area mostly partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated thunderstorms in their respective areas.

Metro Manila	Mostly cloudy	Metro Manila	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Mostly cloudy	Aparri	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly cloudy	Cubi	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly cloudy	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Mostly cloudy	Dipolog	Partly cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Mostly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly cloudy	Davao	Partly cloudy

STL 3D

6	17
14	19
7	13

SUERTRESS

4	2
0	0
6	8

FOUR DIGIT (Swertres)

6 5 2 0

MEGAMILLIONS

10 13 16 19 38 37
P8,507,392.20

6/55 GRANDLOTTO

16 17 18 20 28 31
P10,001,000.00

LOTTO: TMD Team 6/42 LOTTO, result to 6/45: PCSO photo

No strike, no spin-off at PAL

4 Cabinet members confirmed

By Gil Cabunegan

FOUR CABINET members were confirmed by the Commission on Appointments (CA) on the final day of Congress before it goes on a long holiday break.

Only the confirmation of Energy Secretary Jose Rene Almendras is among the few batch of President Aquino's appointees now deferred to Jan. 17 next year as commission members—12 senators and 12 representatives led by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile—continue to quiz him on power problems to assist in fixits that have been unresolved in the last two years.

"It's the best Christmas gift," exclaimed Tourism Secretary Alberto Lim who led the first list of Cabinet members which include Education Secretary Armin Luistro, Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala and Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson.

Lim is still licking his wounds from the "Filipinas Kay Ganda" issue, the much maligned tourism promotion slogan he pushed a few weeks ago and which led to the resignation of his Undersecretary Victoria Bautista less than six months in office.

Bias for 'open skies'

The commission members also gloated over the vocal opposition of private tourism operators led by Robert Lim Joseph who chided Lim for his bias for an "open skies" policy which would allow foreign carriers to invade routes currently limited to local carriers.

Alcala was optimistic that with the chairmen of the commission hearings out of the way they would be able to do their work and deliver results. The lawmakers ignored the opposition raised by businessmen Edwin Lee (who based Alcala's unlawful appointment in Phoenix Products Inc.) and architect Marlon Manuel (who claimed that Alcala was guilty of erasure for selling houses and lots in Quezon without a license).

Singson was all smiles after the hearing as he breezed through the proceedings despite questions on his conflict of interest being a former top official and stockholder of Metro Pacific Investments Corp. which has interests in toll roads and some dam studies.

Lumpas also beamed a big sigh of relief as he got the commissioners' nod despite an initial threat from Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago that she would block the Koreo head of De La Salle University. Santiago has since softened her stance.

Palace orders status quo

By Norman Bordadora and Paolo G. Montecillo

PRESIDENT Aquino has ordered the Philippine Airlines (PAL) management and union to refrain from any action that would ground the nation's flag carrier, and suspended a program to spin off PAL's related services, Malacañang said yesterday.

Mr. Aquino's directives "to desist from any action that will aggravate the situation pending resolution" of the case were contained in an order signed by Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa Jr., according to the President's spokesperson, Edwin Lacierda.

"What it plainly means is that on the part of labor, they'll not engage in strikes. On the part of management, there will be no lockout," Presidential Spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said in a news briefing.

Welcomed

Both PAL management and the Philippine Airlines Employees Association (Palea) welcomed Malacañang's order signed on Tuesday.

In a statement, PAL president Jaime J. Bautista said the flag carrier will abide by the Palace's order as it has always done so in the past.

"PAL would like to reiterate that it has not, in any way, shape or form, implemented the spin-off of its three non-core businesses, as it is awaiting the results of the Palace review of the labor dispute," he said.

Bautista said the Palace order is most timely since it comes as the height of the Christmas rush, and commuters have lined up their travel plans and are eager to spend the holidays with their loved ones.

"While PAL's spin-off program can wait, the order stopping the strike in the less Christmas gift the Palace can give to thousands of anxious PAL passengers with scheduled flights this holiday season. The strike ban will manage the anxiety of our passengers in the midst of Pilata's repeated strike threats," he added.

Pilata's president Jun Dela Cruz, however, maintained that Malacañang has primary jurisdiction over the labor dispute. He stressed that it was Pilata who sought presidential review of the earlier order of the Department of Labor and Employment recognizing the flag carrier's prerogative to restructure its organization and implement a spin-off plan affecting some 2,600 workers.

Initial victory

"It is an initial victory for Pilata. The order has stopped PAL's most horrendous of more than 2,000 employees," Pilata lawyer Marlon Manuel said.

"We appreciate the President's intervention in this labor dispute, which is an important issue not only to PAL workers but to all workers in the country," he added.

"We thank the President for this decision," Pilata president Gerry Rivera said in a statement.

Rivera said the union had called off a strike planned this month. "This order by the palace should be good for everybody, including especially for our union members," he said.

"Holding a strike is very hard, but we planned this because we wanted to defend our jobs."

PAL earlier said while its bookings had not been affected by strike threats, many worried passengers had called to ask if a possible work stoppage would result in a disruption of operations.

'Not that poor'

TAGUM CITY—Some 60,000 beneficiaries have been removed from the list of recipients of the government's assistance because they were not really poor, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman said here on Tuesday.

Soliman said during a visit here to review the government's poverty alleviation program that those stricken from the list of 300,000 beneficiaries had either not been qualified for enrollment set by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

The program, which was started in 2008 by the Arroyo administration, seeks to help 4.3 million poor Filipino families by 2015.

Soliman said the DSWD was inviting nongovernment organizations and religious groups as well as civil society groups to monitor the implementation of the P21-billion conditional cash transfer (CCT) project.

"These third eye groups would help ensure that local politics would not get in the way in the selection of the program's beneficiaries," she said. Winston Lim, Augusto Whaleran

OFWs fueling boom in real estate market

THE PHILIPPINES' famous diaspora of overseas workers is fueling a boom in the real estate market back home as they snap up homes and apartments to safeguard their futures.

Property prices have recovered strongly since the global financial crisis of 2008, with investments from the nine million Filipinos toiling away in foreign lands a significant factor, industry figures say.

"Overseas workers are moving the market. Property rates are selling and values have a demand, prices go up," Emily Demeric, head of the Real Estate Brokers Association of the Philippines, told AFP.

Industry sales nationwide this year are estimated at let P300 billion compared with about P200 billion each in 2009 and 2008, according to Clara Cordero from Jones Lang LaSalle, a global investment advisory firm.

"Nobody thought there would be such a quick recovery from the slump that began in 2008," said Cordero, research head of the company's Philippines branch.

Filipino workers abroad have a reputation for working in lower-paid employment, such as construction workers, maids, nurses and janitors.

But their sheer magnitude—they account for about 10 percent of the Philippine population—means they have long been a major force in the economy.

In 2009, they sent home $17.3 billion, making up more than 10 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, according to government data.

And Filipinos are increasingly moving to higher-paid sectors, such as medicine, engineering and the media.

Overseas workers usually opt for houses costing about P5 million, besides by foreign standards but well in the middle-class bracket for Filipinos, according to figures from the brokers' association.

Fifty-year-old consultant engineer Rodolfo Oliverio has spent most of his working life outside of the Philippines but he's an active player in the domestic real estate market.

Oliverio, 50, says he has already invested in big two-level houses in the hotel of Metro Manila for his wife and children to live in, and he is paying for a third he recently bought just outside the nation's capital.

"If you work here, nothing will happen. The salaries are too small. The only way to afford a house is to become an overseas worker," Oliverio told AFP while on his annual vacation in Manila.

"Naturally, among overseas workers, the most important thing is a house and lot."

Oliverio said that as a ship's bosun—the crew's foreman—for a foreign company he earned about P85,000 a month, roughly four times more than he could earn doing the same job with a local cargo line.

With his salary he said he was confident he could afford the repayments on his third house, a middle-class 40-square-meter place south of Manila which cost a little over P1.3 million.

Industry observers said Oliverio's real estate goals were typical of many overseas workers.

"Most have left families back home so they want to have a home for their families. Their children, their parents, there are the ones who stay in the house they buy," said Dennis Abad, AFP

'Pirates' to lose US visas

OWNERS AND administrators of multi-risk having their US visas revoked if they are found selling counterfeit goods.

In a briefing yesterday, Director General Ricardo Blancaflor of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) said the agency would take a holistic approach to solving the country's piracy problems and would no longer rely on raids and seizures.

This includes the cancellation of violators' business and import permits, the revocation of Securities and Exchange Commission licenses, and even the cancellation of visas to the US and other countries, he said.

"We've already talked to the US Embassy and they're open to studying the proposal. We're also speaking with other embassies," he said. "We want to go beyond search and seizure. We want accountability."

The agency is also seeking authority to inspect warehouses and other areas even without a warrant. This will be particularly useful for preventing counterfeit goods from even making it out of the ports and warehouses and into the market. —Abigail L. Re

SLEx-Star toll link now open

SOUTH LUZON Tollways Corp. (SLTC) has opened the 7.1-kilometer road linking two of southern Luzon's major toll roads.

The company announced yesterday that it had decided to open Toll Road 1 (Segment 2) (TR1) and Indo South Luzon Expressway (SLEx) and the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (Star) toll road, in anticipation of the monster crowd fly during the Christmas season.

TR1 has been existing idle since it was completed last June. SLTC, which is the local unit of Malaysia's MTD Capital Berhad, has refused to open it because it could not charge toll from motorists passing through the road.

The toll rate for TR1 is included in the company's application for an increase in toll rates for the whole of SLEx. The 250-percent increase in rates has been met with opposition mainly from transport groups.

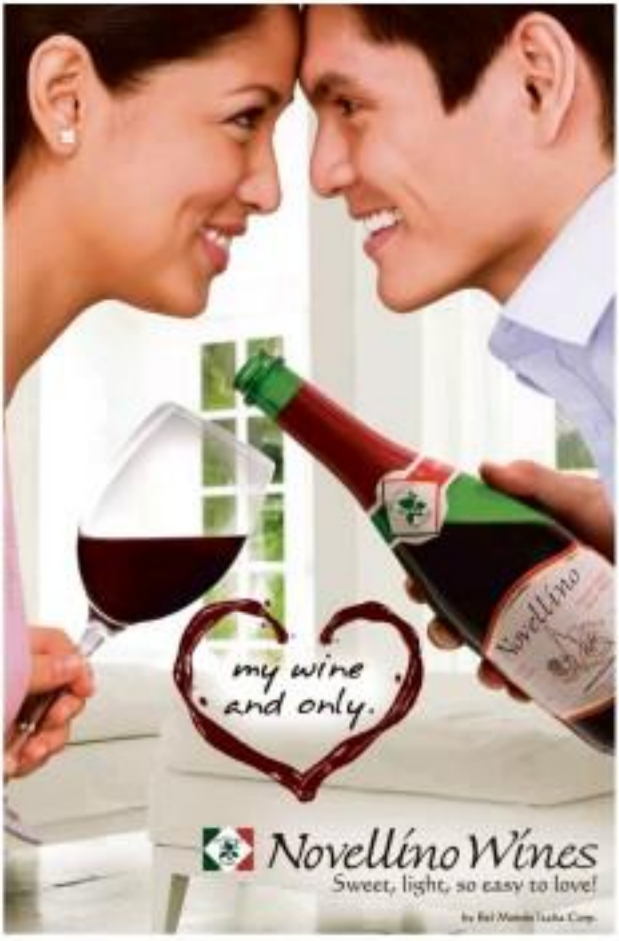
The Supreme Court has ruled that SLTC's toll increase, which is being done to allow the company to recoup the P24 billion it spent on the road, is legal.

"We decided to open it because we expect a lot of traffic due to the holiday season," SLTC spokesperson Alma Tanseco said in an interview.

The road is expected to ease traffic congestion in southern Luzon such as Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Quezon—collectively known as Calabarzon. By passing through TR1, motorists will be able to avoid going through congested commercial roads.

In a separate development, the Metro Manila Skyway succesfully opened its new Stage 3 toll road. The new Stage 3 is part of the Stage 2 extension of the Skyway. This will add 7 kilometers of elevated expressway to the existing 11 kilometer elevated section. The ground-level portion from Magallanes to Mabuhay is also under Skyway O&M's supervision.

Rondel K. Montecillo



Governor bares ₱150-M Ampatuan offer

By Nancy Carvajal

MAGUINDANAO Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu has disclosed that he was offered ₱150 million to drop the charges against an Ampatuan family member who is on trial for the Maguindanao massacre.

Another ₱5 million is being offered to each family of the massacre victims in exchange for an affidavit of desistance, according to an aide who claimed to have received an offer.

Mangudadatu, who was in movement following a brawl at the Maguindanao massacre trial in Quezon City yesterday, said he was offered the money in exchange for dropping the charges against Zaldy Ampatuan, the governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

"An offer of ₱150 million was made to me last month to drop the charges against Zaldy, and another him of the minor increase he wants he was in Manila when is happened," Mangudadata said.

The governor said the offer was made through someone who is "close" to both the Mangudadatu and Ampatuan families.

He did not name the emissary but described him as a trusted aide of the Ampatuan patriarch, former Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr.

According to Mangudadata, it was not the first time that his family had been approached in an attempt to negotiate Zaldy's freedom.

He said Zaldy's wife had talked to his mother when the latter was confined in a hospital recently.

"The wife visited my mother and asked her to try to convince me to drop the charges against Zaldy. They think it would work, bahas si bibe (woman to woman)," he said.

According to Mangudadata, he played along with the emissary who brought the ₱150-million offer to see if he could get more information against the Ampatuans.

"I told the valley to increase the offer. But I will never ever do that [accept the bribe] and betray everyone," he said.

He said he was able to spot the conversation with the Ampatuan emissary.

Mangudadata played the recording to reporters, in which a man could be heard talking of an immediate 50 percent down payment.

'We won't suffer fate of Vizconde Massacre'

By Philip C. Tubeza

THERE IS no danger that the Maguindanao massacre case will end up in an acquittal like the Vizconde case, Maguindanao Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu said yesterday.

Mangudadatu, whose family members were the main massacre victims, said he was not worried because the main witnesses in the Maguindanao massacre case were "covered witness," some of whom were even participants of the crime.

"In the Vizconde case, witness did not expect to testimony [under oath]. Allam, she didn't say it. So if it's also hard to talk about saying the profile or someone [in the case] where you didn't see it. In other words, it was a lie," Mangudadatu told reporters at the Quezon City regional trial court where the hearings on the Maguindanao massacre are being held.

"I don't believe we will suffer the same fate. One evidence is strong," he said.

Mangudadatu's wife, relatives and supporters were among the 58 killed in the massacre allegedly carried out by a clan rival, the Ampatuans, on Nov. 23, 2009.

He urged those acquitted in the Vizconde case and their families to help Leave the condo first justice for his wife and two daughters who were murdered in the Parethesque City in October 1991.

"I feel sorry for him because he lost his wife and children. My message to those who were acquitted is maybe they could also help find out who killed the children," he said.

Yesterday testified over the yesterday's hearing after prosecution and defense lawyers clashed over the latter's "irrelevant questions" directed at a government witness.

Palace, Church launch RH info drive

By Jerome Aning

THE CHURCH hierarchy and Malacañang have agreed to form a technical working group that would conduct a massive information drive on reproductive health and family planning.

Bid Msgr. Juanito Figura, secretary general of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, stressed that the Church will "definitely not" change its mind about the reproductive health bill pending in Congress.

"The Church will not change its stand on morality because morals are constant. It is not a matter of conviction, it is definitely not a matter of plebiscite. It is a matter of what remains true. Take note that the stand of the bishops is dialogue and not debate," Figura said as a joint briefing with presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda following the first of a series of dialogues on the issue.

He said the dialogues were set up for the Church and the Aquino administration, which are an opposite sides in the reproductive health debate, to come up with areas where they can work together.

"For example, if we find contraceptives that are dangerous and [but are] banned, the information material [on it] must state that it is wrong. The Catholic Church would maintain its position that it is wrong to use the [contraceptive]," Figura explained.

10 soldiers killed by rebels in N. Samar

From page A1

the Army's 8ID Infantry Brigade based in Camp Santocyo here, said.

"This is a very unfortunate event, especially this Christmas season. This is the second time that our soldiers [are] the victims of perfidy in the Visayas," said Lt. Gen. Ralph Villanueva, chief of the Armed Forces' Civil-Military Command (Comcom).

In a statement released in Manila, Villanueva called the attack "an act of treachery" on the part of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, New People's Army (NPA).

Recalled from combat

Catrin said the 12 soldiers belonging to the 43rd Infantry Battalion clashed with some 40 NPA rebels who had detonated land mines in Barangay Cuatro St.

They were returning to their base in Barangay Sibubuliyan in Catubig town to observe the ceasefire that the military declared from Dec. 16 to Jan. 3, he said.

Catrin said the rebels took 11 high-powered firearms from the slain soldiers.

The soldiers were identified only on Wednesday morning and were brought to the battalion headquarters where an autopsy would be conducted, he said.

He identified them as Sgt. Antonio Espenal and Cpl. Ben Villagracia, both of Catubig, Samar; Cpl. Richard Macatimo, of Mondol, Zamboanga del Sur; Cpl. Jaime Gallenero, of Bonavis, Northern Samar; Cpl. Allen Ballaban of Barangay Bayling Catarman.

Cpl. Juanito Milagracia, of Barangay Cawayan, Catarman, Dr. Jerold Bregera, of Lubi, Catarman; Pfc. Nathaniel Matinero, of San Ignacio, Jacinto del Sur; Pfc. Jerico Acuña of Otic, Eastern Samar; and Pfc. Roy Catanes, of Bonavis, Northern Samar.

The slain Isag, Jowar Cubo, was a resident of Barangay Perez, Catubig, Northern Samar.

The wounded soldiers—Cpl. Ricardo Labrad and Pfc Heder Palerlan...were brought to Northern Samar Provincial Hospital, Catrin said.

No pursuit mission

Government troops would not pursue the attackers to complicate with the ceasefire, said Maj. Christopher Tampos, 8ID spokesperson.

But he said troops would remain on "defensive posture" and conduct patrols near their detachments to prevent any NPA attack and protect the community.

The latest rebel strike was launched de-

MEMBERS of the New People's Army stand in formation during the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Communist Party of the Philippines in a remote camp in Davao in this photo taken on Dec. 26, 2008. —

spite a planned resumption of long-stalled peace talks early next year in Norway, which has been brokering the talks.

The Philippines' 41-year Maoist rebellion has been one of Asia's longest and bloodiest. More than 120,000 combatants and civilians have died in the rural-based rebellion.

Last week, a soldier was killed while another remained missing after 7000 rebels ambushed a base in Barangay Sanbo also in Eastern Samar.

Two civilians, a 16-year-old boy and a former barangay captain, were also killed and the base owner was seriously wounded.

Resort raid

In Cagsi, some 40 NPA rebels wearing Ilonggan attire have raided a mountain resort in Tapia town late Tuesday and seized several firearms and equipment.

The rebels entered Barrio Mountain Resort at Sitio Maraga in Barangay San Antonio at around 4:30 p.m. and disarmed the four security guard.

The rebels were reported Supt. PO2 Gary Bo-as, provincial police investigator, said in a phone interview.

But said the rebels took the guard's .45 cal. pistol, and other firearms, including an M-16 rifle, a Garand rifle, a hand grenade, six hand-held radios, two pairs of binoculars, a megaphone, a backpack and fatigue clothes.

The rebels also took the 9-mm pistol and cell phone of PFO2 Jaime Tadeoan of the Tapia police, who was drinking at the resort, said 1st Lt. Mark Andrew Pandita, spokesperson of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division.

Pandita said the attack could be in retaliation for the resort owner's refusal to pay "revolutionary taxes" to the rebels.

Arrests in Sarangani

In Sarangani, an NPA leader and four others were arrested by soldiers in Barangay Upper Bagacay in Malapatan town on Tuesday.

Lt. Col. Medel Aguilar, public information officer of the Army's 10ID Infantry Division, identified the rebel as Tonino Mongkil, alias Ka Mustasy, who is facing frustrated murder, multiple murders and other charges; Joel Mongkil, Benito Balbino, Ricky Mongkil and Anthony Subong.

Aguilar said soldiers belonging to the Peace and Development Team (PDT) of the 73rd Infantry Division were tipped off about the presence of Mongkil's group in the village.

Two rifles were seized from Mongkil.

Peace talks have been suspended since 2004 after the rebels accused the government of not living up to its declaration on US and European terrorist lists.

Hopes were raised for the resumption of talks with the communist insurgents, as well as with Moro rebels, after President Aquino took office in June and reorganized the government peace panels.

New gov't negotiator

A new government negotiator, Alexander Padilla, met with his rebel counterpart, Luis Jalandoni, in Hong Kong recently and agreed to the Christmas ceasefire and talks in January to discuss the planned resumption of formal negotiations the following month.

In another boost to the talks, Mr. Aquino last week ordered the dropping of charges against 43 health workers who were arrested in February on suspicion they were rebels engaged in medical and bomb-making training in Morong, Rizal.

Padilla could be expected to successfully conclude the talks in the new years. —With reports from Inara Z. Pacolinggan in Manila, Philipe U. Cribio and Hector Bungay, Inquirer Visayas; Dennis Jay Santos, Inquirer Mindanao; and AP

WikiLeaks ...

From page A2

the Philippines as a "basket case" that could become a haven for investors, leaked diplomatic cables published on Wednesday showed.

Troubled region

The memos of October 2008 talks between Australia and the United States, handed to WikiLeaks and published exclusively by Sydney Morning Herald, also gave a scathing assessment of the "troubled" Asia-Pacific region.

The Herald reported top foreign official David Irvine's refusing to "no increase in illegal immigration from Indonesia's continuing political instability in Thailand, the basket case of the Philippines."

A separate cable published on Wednesday by the Herald said there was an "ongoing downward spiral in the Philippines, where the collapse of the peace process in the south threatened to make the area the new region-al epicenter of terrorist jihadis."

US East Timor, Bruhn said there was "the continuing low level of [overall] security and slow development, assistance to East Timor [and] problems of bad governance in many of the Pacific island states."

Fellow diplomat Graham Hatcher told US officials that Australia's "overriding concern [in Southeast Asia] was to maintain stability."

"While China might look impressive externally, its internal politics were characterized by secretiveness, paranoia and uncertainty," Hatcher said, according to the Herald.

Another cable leaked last week revealed that then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd also warned China as "paranoid" about Tibet and Taiwan, and "delusional and deeply emotional."

The current leaks comes one reported US diplomats to consider using force against the Asian giant in a worst case scenario.

Citing the Philippines as part of a Gold in Southeast Asia away from military rule, Chinese Ambassador Ernesto Macaraig Del Gallego told US diplomats: "While there are persistent rumors about military coups in the Philippines, they rarely happen."

For his part, Eric John, then deputy assistant secretary for Southeast Asian affairs of the US Department of State, told the Chinese counterparts the "extremely successful approach in assisting overtime the government of the Republic of the Philippines has taken place in Mindanao, with the support of the US," the cable said.

Poverty a key challenge

John agreed with his Chinese hosts that "President Arroyo has stabilized Philippine leadership and ensured strong fiscal and economic policies."

But he stressed that Washington and Beijing "must encourage Manila to continue working hard to promote transparency and good governance."

He told the Americans that Beijing "can assist in Philippine agricultural development and transportation infrastructure, "starting merely in the key challenge" facing the Southeast Asian country.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) refused to comment on the leaks concerning the Philippines.

But DFA spokesperson Salvador de Mariano joined the WikiLeaks bashing, saying the documents "are not reliable." "Neither could we exchanges between diplomats and government officials rather than [be] reliable them.

"The disclosure of classified information is a crime in most jurisdictions and disclosures on a massive scale is most disturbing," he said. With reports from AFP

Jerry E. Esplanada and Christine O. Avendaño

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, December 16, 2010
2nd Week of Advent

1st Reading: Is 54:1-10
Gospel: Lk 7:24-30

When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began speaking to the people about John. And he said, "What did you want to see when you went to the desert? A reed tossed by the wind? What was there to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? But people who wear fine clothes and enjoy delicate food are found in palaces. What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For John is the one foretold in Scripture in these words: 'I am sending my messenger ahead of you to prepare your way. No one may be found greater than John among those born of women [us, I tell you, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he]."

All the people listening to him, even the tax collectors, had acknowledged the call of God in receiving the baptism of John, whereas the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, in not letting themselves be baptized by him, ignored the will of God.

Commentary

"The one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John."

However much the great figures of the world do, however exalted the powerful of the earth—the kings and councilors, the wealthy and the celebrities—we must not succumb to the temptation of "greatness" on those who give their lives for the good of others. Their godlike heroism puts even power into lowly.

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Webb et al. not vindicated, says Supreme Court

Frances Mangosing

It is incendiary.

He said the supplemental opinion of Associate Justice Teresita Leonardo-De Castro, who voted against the acquittal, would also help the public better understand the high court's decision.

Said Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano: "That because they were acquitted, it does not mean that Hubert and his group did not do it."

It was the senator's father, the late Rene Cayetano, who led the prosecution team that succeeded in getting a conviction for Webb et al. from then Mandaluyong Judge Amelita Tolentino 10 years ago.

Speaking with reporters, Cayetano said: "I'd like to respect the court and the families involved—both the Honrados and the Webbs. But there is a sense of disgust and frustration among our citizens because for 20 years, this one sensational case has been considered solved. I really feel for the Honrado family especially Mommy Lusan. I pray that he gets the justice he is looking for because it is now all up to the Lord."

Cayetano said the high court did not declare Albano a fraud and merely visited their opinion of her testimony.

"The Supreme Court had a different opinion and the decision is 7-4-4. That doesn't mean that she is not a credible witness. If the decision will be the basis in determining the credibility of the witness, there will be a lot of people who will not rely on a witness in the country," he said.

No justice yet

Marquez admitted that as far as the high court was concerned, justice was not served with the acquittal of the defendants.

"I'm not saying that justice has been served. Those who killed the Honrados have yet to be held accountable. Where is justice there?" he said, adding:

"If the accused were really innocent as they claim, then they were unjustly prosecuted and jailed. Then they should also be victims of injustice. How can you say justice was done there?"

Marquez said that while Webb et al. could not file suits for damages, their complaint would have to be under the litigation process.

Toward real closure

Justice Secretary Leila de Lima said in an interview that she was considering a reinvestigation of the murder of Emilia Honrado and her daughters Carmela and Jennifer.

De Lima said, "real closure" was needed for what she described as one of the "most sensational and high-profile" cases that had gripped the nation.

She said there was "a very, very high possibility" of a reinvestigation primarily because of reopening for Leonardo-Honrado, who lost both mother and daughters in a brutal attack in the family home while he was away in the United States.

"We are aware of the appeal of Mr. Leon Honrado. Of course, he was so depressed, so frustrated, at the decision of the Supreme Court and his one and only prayer in his appeal for help to find out who are the real perpetrators," the Justice said.

De Lima said she would have National Bureau of Investigation Director Magtanggol Gatdula appraise her of the details of the case before deciding on whether a new inquiry was in order.

Flight indicative of guilt

Among the issues she said she wanted to clarify with the NBI was the reported loss of Webb's sworn affidavit and copy of the warrant, Jury Pilare and Antonio Ventura, contained in large-sized duty sheet indicated by the number 13, 1993.

"How come all these years no one undertook the effort to track those down? And another question is, why are they in Bulacan? Flight is indicative of guilt, so legal principles say. Who knows, the truth may be with those two other accused still at large," she said.

Nonetheless, she said she was aware of the Honrados and challenges of a reinvestigation, given that almost two decades had passed since the crime was committed on June 29, 1991.

"We will help [Leon Honrado] within the bounds of law and to the best of our ability as law enforcers," De Lima said.

She said indications might still exist the help of Albano and "other witnesses" in the earlier investigation despite the fact that the Supreme Court had thrashed Albano's testimony and doubted her credibility.

"Who knows, she may still know something or [someone] who really knows something about this case," De Lima said.

She added that Albano's coverage under the Witness Protection Program had been terminated.

Echoing Marquez's comments, De Lima expressed the belief that there were no witnesses in the high court's decision.

"I never knew long this has existed, both sides have been jeopardized, damaged. That is the defect in our system. We have to find serious ways and means to address this perennial problem in our justice system because justice delayed is justice denied," she said.

Running against time

Marquez said government prosecutors and law enforcement agencies would be running against time in going after the "real" killers of the Honrados.

"After 20 years, the more serious trails prosecutors cases involving heinous crimes[,]" Marquez said, adding that in the case of the Visayan massacre, the government should file a criminal complaint within the next six months.

"After June 30, 2011, no charges can be filed by the prosecutors. Even those cases charges previously filed that have yet to be resolved," he said.

According to Marquez, the rule on the prescription period will not apply to the fugitives Filar and Ventura.

Although charges were filed against the two men, he said the court did not acquire jurisdiction over them because they were not arraigned and presented in court during the trial.

"Since they were not arrested, the period [also] period stalls," he said.

He also said the warrants for the arrest of Filar and Ventura were still valid.

Marquez reiterated that the justices based their decision on evidence, stenographic notes and other court documents presented to them.

Dissenting opinion outvoted

"The job of the justice is to review decisions based on the evidence and witnesses presented. It is not their job to prosecute and conduct an investigation," he said.

Marquez also said the dissenting opinion by Associate Justice Martin Villarama Jr. could have been the main ruling had he not been outvoted during the deliberations.

Because of this, the opinion for acquittal written by Associate Justice Roberto Abad became the majority decision.

In every case submitted for review, the high court assigns a "justice-in-charge" to lead the deliberations. Villarama prepared his own primer to members. Abad, in turn, is justice in charge of the Visayan massacre case.

"That he did and got enough votes. That's why he [the] opinion became the dissent," Marquez said. With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Alexis Pinga and Jeannette I. Andrade

Hubert: It really smells like Christmas, brings back old mem'ries

Frances Mangosing

ence," he relented.

Webb's family moved to Cleveland Town, an exclusive enclave in Pembroke City, from their BF Homes residence also in Parañaque, a year after he was jailed for the grisly Honrado murders in 1991.

Aside from walking his pet dog, a Golden Retriever, his first day as a free man was spent reuniting to and from his parents' modest cook, and pictorial during television and radio interviews.

But when things shall have slowed down, he hoped to do some shopping for clothes. "I think we can get to buy some clothes already because I've been wearing this since yesterday," he said, referring to his walking shorts.

"Yes, we definitely have to do that because he is already borrowing underwear," added Hubert's father, former Sen. Freddie Webb, drawing laughter from the reporters.

Visit to dentist

Aside from shopping, Hubert's "to-do" list included a visit to a dentist and an ophthalmologist to check something in his eyes.

Perhaps, topping his list is to spend more time with his 17-year-old son.

Appearing at ABC's "Headstart," he said he planned to do that.

And hopefully, a few days later, "when everything has settled down," his family said he would be treated for bonding his son to users going to the gym with him to get fit.

"Because for the past 11 years, his son inside the prison was a barbell which he would call [unintentionally]," said the former senator.

"These are the things in store for us but outside of that, as he had said already, we're doing a lot of public assistance to ensure a program," he said.

The Supreme Court acquitted Webb, Antonio Lejano, Michael Gambullon, Hospicio Fernandez, Miguel Rodriguez, Peter Estrada and Gerardo Biong of the murders of Carmelita Honrado, 47, and her daughters Carmela, 18, and Jennifer, 7, in their Dasmariñas home on June 30, 1991.

The high court ordered their release on Tuesday after finding the prosecution's failure to prove their guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

On ex-IQ

Webb later moved to Makati City for an interview at the Radyo Inquirer studios, affording him one of his first trips as a free man since his release.

He relished each gesture—like a man hungry for cheerful conversations.

He said he was delighted just to see the "Skyway," the elevated highway south of the metropolis, which wasn't there yet when he was put behind bars at age 26.

In white sneakers, shorts and sport shirt, Webb seemed ready to look in the many surprises the city holds for someone who opened prison in the twenty-something ripeness of his youth and came out at a time he "figured" he'd grow tame on his chest but with his good conversational English intact.

As he put it yesterday, the ex-

THE MORNING AFTER Hubert Webb talks about the smell of the Christmas tree in his mother Ineé Jan Sonza during Wednesday's interview with the INQUIRER at the lobby of Cleveland Tower in Parañaque City. MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

pleasure "was just beginning to sink in" for the newly acquitted accused.

He gamely reminisced about life in the maximum security compound of the New Bilibid Prisons: Waking up at 6 a.m., playing basketball or tennis (the latter thanks to a court built by another famous inmate, child molester Antonio Sonny Corpuz, prominent Romeo Jalosjos).

He finished at least one book: "Memoirs Among Thieves." But he also managed to leaf through the "The Lightning Thief" and newly finished Bible up to that part "before Revelations."

The public "Yes, sir. Yes, sir" officers cropped up in his reply when addressing Radyo Inquirer anchor Mon Tulfo in the interview.

Truly happy

"Sir, now I'm free I'm smiling! No one can be truly happy if there is still anger inside him[,]" he said, whose ordeal it has still left any hatred toward his accusers, particularly Senator Allano, the main prosecution witness who pinned him down for the gruesome murder of the Honrados.

A "hypocrite" he would be if he would say he had not thoughts of exacting revenge on Allano. "The question is, what you do with that thought. We're only human," Webb said.

Fraternity

To feel "safer" amid some 15,000 convicts in the maximum security compound, he had to join the Spanish gang, "a sort of fraternity" which would have its representative on his cheek, just above the right breast.

But one thing he was proud of was that he never figured in any prison riot. "I'm a nonbeliever," he declared, almost proudly.

But there were also times when he would fall into depression and would "crawl into his head—but inexplicably emerge out of it" after three days."

Thoughts of suicide

Suicide also crossed his mind "a few times."

And then came the word from the Supreme Court on Tuesday.

He said he was with his cellmate, fellow Visayan convict Lejano, when the news broke out. "I yelled 'yes' to you, boy!"

Webb's father, Freddie, who was the first to show up at the reporters' party and stayed around the dinner before leaving.

Unimpressed

Jarvis's colleague in the recently blue, Zimbabwe Rep. Philippines Magnitskyi, was unimpressed with the final outcome of the Budget.

He questioned the bicameral committee's decision to strike off a House-approved provision that any savings from the P23-billion conditional cash transfers in 2011 go to education and health.

The Senate had objected to this because it would limit the President's power to declare savings and realign them.

"Aren't these an additional perk of the President?" Magtanggol said of the potential savings from the CCT that could be realigned by Mr. Aquino.

The President acknowledged that Sherwood lives some misses in his first few months in office.

"We still stumble every now and then, but I'm assured, we're getting better," he said.

P-Noy invites media for cheese and 'pan de sal' on Dec. 24, 25 or 26

Frances Mangosing

to celebrate the approval of the P1,645-billion 2011 budget with reporters and other well-wishers in their pre-holiday partying.

The President said he would likely be signing into law the general appropriations bill, which the Senate and the House ratified before adjourning this week, during the holidays.

"Yes, we will be signing the budget," he told reporters on the middle of a Christmas party at the press center, a couple of hours after lawmakers ratified the bicameral committee report on the budget measure.

If he signs the measure before the end of the year, it will be the first time since the Estrada administration that the national budget is passed in the same year it was submitted.

"This is the first time that this will be signed on time in 11 years. This is a good start," Mr. Aquino said, praising Speaker Feliciano Belmonte and Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II and Ako Bikol Rep. Rodel Fariñas, chair of the ways and means committee, for seeing it through.

No lavish celebration

In his first Christmas in Malacañang, there won't be a holiday for the bachelor President.

He invited reporters to visit Malacañang during the holidays, but indicated they should not expect a lavish celebration.

"If you're free on Dec. 24, 25 or 26, visit us although we'll be working on those days. We have pan de sal and cheese," he said, chuckling. He told reporters to look for Communications Assistant Secretary Hey Wachi.

After his remarks, he granted requests for photo ops with reporters and TV crews and then proceeded to the lawmakers' party at the Malacañang Residence complex's South Wing.

Mr. Aquino developed ties with House reporters while he was still a fanatic lawmaker for nine years, making it a point to attend reporters' gatherings.

He barely missed for two President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, now Pampanga representative, who was the first to show up at the reporters' party and stayed around the dinner before leaving.

Unimpressed

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Pre-pay dollar debts, gov't told

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG SHOULD start paying the private sector's foreign debt to take advantage of the continued appreciation of the peso against the dollar, according to a resolution filed in the House of Representatives ordinand yesterday.

"A strong peso would reduce the value of the government's foreign debt," said House Resolution No. 1486 filed by Representative Pedro Pedrosa of Cagayan and his brother Manases of the Misamis Oriental party-list group.

The brothers cited data from the National Economic and Development Authority which showed that the country incurred \$7 billion development assistance (ODA) loans this year alone.

"Of the \$7 (\$8.8 billion), seven were cleared, while two loans worth \$250 million because of terms during the first semester of 2010," they said.

As of June 2010, the total ODA commitments amounted to \$6.6 billion, or \$800 million higher than last year with the government disbursing almost \$963.74 million for the first semester of this year, or 37 percent higher than \$826.39 million disbursed in the same period last year.

The total outstanding foreign debt grew by 0.5 percent or \$360 million to \$57 billion at the end of the first half of this year.

With a hefty inflow of foreign capital into emerging economies like the Philippines, the British central bank governor Mong Berg and Shanghai Banking Corp. projects that the peso will hit 43 to a dollar by the end of the year.

'Morong 43' still awaiting release

RELATIVES OF the 43 detained health workers accused of being communist rebels missed another day of the Manila court early yesterday, patiently waiting for news about the release of their loved ones from prison.

Castor Jan Alunan, the eldest son of the 62-year-old Dr. Alex Monroe, said he felt as if he was "suspended in air" while awaiting the court decision which was expected to be handed down yesterday or today.

Castor said his father, a community doctor for almost 30 years, has already packed all his belongings, believing that he and the others, collectively called the "Morong 43," will be released any time now.

Clerk of court Amado Aquino had told reporters on Tuesday that Manila Judge Ismael Gesta Jr. would decide on the issue of their release very soon "within today (Wednesday) or Thursday."

Relatives and supporters of the health workers carried placards and photos of the detainees while the hearing on the state prosecutors' withdrawal of charges against the 43 was going on. Access had barred the media from covering the hearing.

After the state prosecutors submitted the justice department's decision reversing the information filed last February against the 43 detainees, defense lawyers told the court that they agreed and were joining the motion for the withdrawal of the charges.

Julius Garcia Mesina, one of the defense lawyers, said they expect the court to grant the motion and their clients released within the week.

The International Human Rights Watch yesterday said that in ordering the withdrawal of charges against the 43, President Aquino has sent a clear message to the police and the military: follow the law when making arrests.

The New York-based rights abuse group also said that the claims of torture and mistreatment of the health workers should be investigated, and those found responsible held accountable. Nina Calleja and Leila B. Salaverria

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OPINION

Yellow over bullied: inquirer.opinion@gmail.com; fax 896-2967

Partial justice

EDITORIAL

WE SYMPATHIZE with the unfortunate Lauro Vizconde, especially since the Supreme Court's acquittal of Hubert Webb and all others convicted in the Vizconde massacre case (including the two who were sent to killing and never served a day in prison) means the pain of anniversary is back to haunt him and other kin. So, if not Webb and company, then who killed Estrellita, Carmela and Jennifer Vizconde on June 30, 1991?

At the same time, we understand the basis of the Court's reasoning: A criminal conviction, no matter how sensational the case or lurid the details, no matter how entrenched people's opinions about it may be, must be based on proof of guilt beyond any reasonable doubt.

It seems to us that the key passage in Justice Roberto Abad's ponencia, written for a majority of 7 out of 13 justices who took part in the deliberations, is the following, and powerful, sentence: "In our criminal justice system, what is important is, not whether the court entertains doubts about the innocence of the accused since an open mind is willing to explore all possibilities, but whether it entertains a reasonable, lingering doubt as to his guilt."

That is worth repeating, in layman's terms: What matters is not doubt about innocence but doubt about guilt.

As news of the Court's decision spread like dry brush fire on Tuesday, and copies became available online, public reaction was immediate, often vehement—and fixed. Those who doubted the innocence of Webb et al. thought the acquittal was a shame; those who doubted their guilt welcomed the ruling. The Vizconde massacre is such a vivid part of recent history, its rancor greatly absorbed by popular culture, that it would have been difficult in the last two days to find sentient citizens whose minds were changed by the decision. Most people who knew about the case had entrenched views on the guilt or innocence of Webb and company; that is why public reaction less than far from both passionate and immediate.

It does not help, it does not bring closure any closer, when we read Justice Martin Villarama's nearly more detailed dissenting opinion. This dissent makes a powerful case for just the opposite: that guilt was proved beyond a reasonable doubt. His compelling presentation of the facts and application of the law can only reinforce the views of those who thought Webb et al. were guilty.

We reported extensively on the Vizconde case. But like everyone else, we too must ask ourselves: What if, in fact, there was the slightest kind of doubt about Webb's guilt? If there was the slightest possibility that the essential facts were not correctly appreciated by the trial court and the Court of Appeals?

Our commitment to civil liberties makes the answers clear: If the tiniest particle of doubt about a person's criminal liability is present, a judge must acquit. That, in turn, is what the Court's majority decision says.

Lauro Vizconde may accuse the Court of partial justice, partial to the influential and the moneyed. We can understand that sensitiveness, and realize that it is shared by many Filipinos. But what kind of money, of influence, takes 15 years to take effect, to make its decisive presence felt? On the other hand, public pressure is a kind of influence too, and just as disruptive and harmful if applied to the legal process. On this issue, we think the Court decided on the merits, such as they were, of the controversial case.

Then there's this too: With the exception of former fugitives Joey Filart and Artemio Watawat, the convicted did spend 15 years behind bars. Webb was jailed when he was still a young man; when he walked out of prison the other day he was, and looked, middle-aged. This is real punishment, about half the length of a life imprisonment term. On our view, the real unfortunate consequence of the acquittal is that those who did not share Webb's strongly supported alibi managed to share in its benefits.)

Still, the question remains: What if Webb et al. were actually guilty, but were only finally acquitted because of the incredible, incoherent testimony of principal witness Jessica Alfaro? If that were the case, then perhaps Vizconde and many others who share his pained perspective can take some solace—a little, a bit—in the reality that the guilty got at least half of what they deserved.

Call it partial justice.

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Justice and public opinion

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

MORE THAN at any other time perhaps, ours is a society that is desperately seeking to recover its faith in the legal system as a source of impartial judgment and stable notions of what is right and what is wrong. Politics has greatly tarnished the credibility of our courts. Our people have become cynical, seeing those primarily as instruments of the powerful and the wealthy in their orgies, they sometimes turn to the media to remedy this perceived imbalance. The bias is not intellectual; it is not his modus to dispense justice.

I am afraid the much-awaited Supreme Court decision on the Vizconde case is one evidence that will not strengthen our people's faith in the country's justice system. Not because it is wrong, but because it is not decisive. Even justices voted to reverse the lower courts' finding of guilt, four, including the Chief Justice, voted against acquittal; and four—for a variety of reasons—did not participate.

While a split outcome like this is not unusual, the Vizconde ruling can only reinforce doubt in the ability of our institutions to rise above partisan opposition and withstand pressure in order to render a trustworthy judgment. It also shows a disturbing absence of leadership in the present Supreme Court, or of any effort to secure a consensus on so vital a case to convey the clear voice of judicial reason.

On its face, the decision seems to settle nothing. It falls short of actually pronouncing the innocence of Hubert Webb and his co-accused. The Court has found that the state evidence against them came from an unreliable source, and that Webb's alibi had not been disputed. The Court is saying, in effect, that the proof of guilt has not been proven beyond reasonable doubt.

A public that has eternally stood in judgment over this case in the last 15 years will not be easily appeased by this decision. They will persist in calling the prosecution's star witness, the husband and father of the victims, has posed to the jackass. If those men are innocent, who then is responsible for this gruesome massacre and rape of my family? But, by the same token, Webb and his companions may well also ask: Who will restore the 15 years that have been stolen from us?

These are questions that need to be asked. Unfortunately, it is not the function of the courts to provide the answers. This is a duty of the law enforcement agencies. The courts' function is limited to determining whether there is sufficient evidence to convict persons accused of violating the law. It may be too late now for the police or the National Bureau of Investigation to secure the case, so much time has passed, more than has inflicted unimaginable pain on both the accused and the accuser and their families.

This column, which began in 1995, is practically as old as the Vizconde trial. On my second week as an Inquirer columnist, I wrote a piece titled "A family on trial." (Inquirer, 6/5/96, 9/2) which dealt with the public screening of the "moral career" of the accused and their families, particularly the Webb family. I was concerned then the release of background information was being dug up by media that was ganging up on the public prosecutors could make it very difficult for any judge to remain detached on the relevant facts, aside from that article.

"Soon after Hubert Webb was tagged a suspect in the Vizconde killings, the media became interested in his performance at school. Was he average or outstanding? Did he finish or did he drop out? What kind of schools did he attend? The answers to these questions were diligently sought almost as if his guilt or innocence depended on them... One TV news report aiming together footage of interviews with the former teachers of those young men, again the same questions were asked in the same urgent tone: Were they good, average or bad students? What did their teachers remember about them? Were they popular boys or social misfits or loners?"

Freddie Webb, Hubert's father, was not spared. Then an incumbent senator, Freddie found himself transformed overnight into a lightning rod for popular resentment. The Vizconde massacre unleashed a massive hole of schadenfreude against him and his family that effectively ended his political career. He took all of this with amazing equanimity, quietly pulling his family together instead of allowing it to crumble in an extremely difficult time.

I wrote: "In a highly emotional society like ours, public opinion tends to lean in favor of the perceived victims of power. The public gives to the weak the moral upper hand, as a way of balancing the political advantage of the powerful. Accordingly children of the new rich and the newly powerful are perceived to be highly spoiled, abusive and anti-social. These persons are expected to shower them with expensive cars, clothes and money as a way of making up for their absence from their childhood days. When the database get into results, such persons are seen as more concerned with covering up the mess than with informing their children."

My assessment about public opinion and its relation to justice has grown even more in the last 15 years. Each time I look at the crumbling Lauro Vizconde, I cannot help but share the public's sympathy for a man who could not find justice in our society. Yet when I look at the faces of Freddie and Elizabeth Webb, I get the strong sense that these are people who will not cuddle a son regardless of whether he is right or wrong. Their numerous faith in the innocence of Hubert Webb has been bitter, and every parent can understand their joy.

public.line@ymail.com

Justice

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

JUSTICE Sereno has an idea. Why not just free all the political prisoners? If free has already released the military mutineers and the Morong 43, why not the rest as well?

"In all this protestanding, you have to be in distress, not exclusive of deus [sic] misery," he explained. "The key to coalition-building whether in Congress or in satisfying our country, is to give everyone a place under the sun, so that no one feels left out. That is the key to peace."

Is it a brilliant idea?

No.

The point is not just to release the political prisoners, it is to know why you are releasing them. More than that, the point is not just to know why you are releasing the political prisoners, it is to know why you haven't yet jailed the people who ought to be jailed.

Dr. Sereno's proposal in fact is just a recitation of the thing we kept hearing about after the first false reconciliation. Reconciliation of course in its best sense doesn't just make for good Christian virtue, it makes for good political sense. After a tyrannical government deposed on rationale, it needs to reconcile with those who fought the tyranny, chief of them the political prisoners who lost their freedom, and a great many comrades, doing so. And it needs to reconcile with the people who suffered at the hands of the tyranny, who lost everything they held dear in the course of it.

Government does not need to reconcile with the tyrants and all those who helped them sustain the tyranny. It needs to punish them. It needs to jail them.

The key to real coalition building, whether in Congress or in the nation, is starting on the basis of principle. It is not starting for the sake of starting, for the sake of a beneficence in bloodletting, or for the sake of being bought. Which was all the nutty theme was in Congress during De'ansen's ouster. The congressmen rushed to finance the impeachment bids against GMA, to disrupt the Constitution, and ultimately, in a celebrated parole deed, to oust De Venecia himself after his benefactor tired of him, for the sake of profit. That is not unity, that is venality. That is not the key to peace, that is the key to pus.

Dr. Sereno's "inclusiveness" is self-serving. All it does is propose to make him a feature of the landscape again. In fact, the point is not to give everyone a place under the sun, it is to give those who made the people's lives a living hell a place beyond the pale of the sun, where they can spend the rest of their lives contemplating their misspent lives. The point is not to see make amends with evil-doers, it is to make people like De Venecia and the one person he so famously helped to make people's lives a living hell feel like they have no place to go.

The reasons for releasing the military mutineers and the Morong 43 are patent. The military mutineers did not mount a coup; they tried to stop a coup, specifically the one put up by GMA through the theft of the vote. Certainly, they did not try to put up a military regime, they tried to end a regime that was being propped up by generals who had participated in the theft of the vote. The problem is that they chose to go before the military tribunals, it has always been the easiest they must stand against.

The Morong 43 were never proven to be rebels, they were just arrested and thrown in jail by people who claimed they were so. And even if they were, they would have been precisely who had been doing what they were doing, which was to heal the sick, which is the essence of rebellion. The people who were the insurgents all these years, it was always those the regime they fought against.

The reasons for releasing the military mutineers and the Morong 43 are patent. So are the reasons for jailing GMA and the people who helped her do another thirteen. The release of the political prisoners in fact is inextricably tied up with the unbending of the Truth Commission. They are two sides of the same coin. The unbending argument for revealing the innocent is the same compelling argument for punishing the guilty.

I will say it again: A Truth Commission is not an ordinary anti-graft body. It is not there to ferret out those who stole the nation's money; it is there to ferret out those who stole the nation's will, the nation's life, the nation's soul. Or in the specific case of the last regime, those who stole the people's vote, who massacred hundreds of political activists, who perverted every institution of society and trampled down the laws of God and man.

No, the point is not just to release all those who ought to be released, it is to jail all those who ought to be jailed. It is not just to unwind the innocent, it is to punish the guilty. Then and now, there has only been one key to lasting peace. That is not inclusiveness.

That is justice.

* * *

Tomorrow night, Feb. 17, the Jesks celebrates their 11th anniversary at 7th Riviera on Aurora St., QC. (Have they been that long? Gosh.) Pizza still holds like the prize they wanted to raffle at gigs 11 years ago. Missy Ahlenius can still make his guitar growly soup, though he swears the years flow more copiously with fat two daughters who inherited his bustatypes.

They'll be launching their book as well, "Any Given Friday," written by Glen Rinnie, photographs by Rose Tarn, the title referring to the day, or night, of the week they rock the socks off people at 7th Riviera. They've been doing it for two decades there now with Edwin Aguilar (bass), Chris Reid (tongue) members, Lary Bonoan (drums), and my good friend Bey Abella (keyboard). The last almost has me believing training vegetables on rivers me into a musician.

Be there. Be yourself justice too.

'China is a hostage-taker'

OUTLOOK

Rigoberto Tiglao

Well (!) what in effect President Aquino told the world, when he announced that his decision to boycott the Nobel ceremony was to continue (he was not to execute the Filipino prisoners convicted of drug trafficking). I hope I am wrong, but Mr. Aquino's statements next hour put the Chinese-Filipino prisoners closer to the firing squad.

Mr. Aquino's rejection was highlighted by the last name of the heads of the other 17 states that boycotted the Nobel ceremony admitted they traveled—under Chinese pressure. Following what diplomacy is, most of them just kept mum, leaving the world to make their own economic conclusions.

Despite his high-approval ratings, this President is an extremely insecure man but he had to summon that the buyers was meant to help save the five Filipino convicts, to protect principles—the universal and defense of human rights—for expediency. "One time, it couldn't be a "no travel to Asia."

The Chinese ambassador of course totally denied that China ever made the five Filipinos her gaining chips—in effect saying that our President was a liar.

Mr. Aquino's totally unnecessary statement raised disbelieving eyebrows globally, with the prime Beijing-hegemony-friendly British Economist saying on their websites the new stories based on this newspaper's scoop. "The Philippine leader revealed the blackmail ... and the under-the-table deal," was one newspaper's spin.

Yes, that Mr. Aquino's statement highlighted the inanity of Mr. Aquino's stance by saying that the move "was no different from the decision of three Presidents Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to pull out the country's 14-member contingent from Iraq in July 2004 after Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz." It escaped Aquino's normally analytical mind that he was putting the emerging superpower, the People's Republic of China, in the same category as Saddam Hussein like the Khaddafi his government brigade, the raging group of former Saddam officers who kidnapped De la Cruz in 2004.

Our need can belabor the obvious differences between the Arroyo and Aquino governments' responses. Mr. Aquino's statements were basically that the five convicts were not guilty of the crimes they were convicted of, and that the Philippine government was not to blame for their conviction. Mrs. Arroyo's statements were that the five convicts were guilty of the crimes they were convicted of, but that the Philippine government was to blame for their conviction.

LETTERS

Let these men of conviction rejoin society

ALMOST 300 political prisoners and detainees continue to languish in jail even as the government claims democracy as its lifeblood. Most of them have been convicted on charges of which common crimes that are only tools of their true identities as grassroots activists, urban poor organizers or even as revolutionaries.

We welcome the possible freedom of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and other like-minded 40 as a step toward reconciliation and peace, for we must look beyond the blurring 43 and the relief of the families that are finally able to see their loved ones again.

But we must not forget the plight of almost 300 political prisoners and detainees in the provinces.

They are not likeable fugitives running away from the law. They are the imprisoned rebels who have been charged with common crimes. They are the alleged sympathizers, farmers, workers, students and human rights defenders wrongfully linked to armed groups.

Most of them have suffered for years, some more than two decades for the Cid-camo Boys killing. Rodolfo Badon and Jerry Bunal have been detained and cried for almost 15 years for the Tamaraw killing.

They, along with more than 300 political prisoners and detainees, also deserve a benefit from an act of reconciliation and justice. They too deserve freedom.

In celebration of human rights week and the political prisoners' day last Dec. 7, the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) reiterates its call for President Aquino to release all political prisoners and detainees in the country.

We believe all freedom-loving peoples, human rights defenders and the common people who are victims of political repression. It is time to let Ouli Dos, Lito Ibarra and women of conviction rejoin society.

P-Noy must act now!

—EMMANUEL AMITTAL
executive director
Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
(TFDP)
TMp1974@yahoo.com

Erratum

The editorial cartoon appearing in yesterday's issue had already been published in the Dec. 11 issue of the Inquirer. We apologize for the oversight.—Ed.

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Let's spend more for education than for GOCCs, 'pork'

I CAME across a news report about students protesting at the UP Ayala Hub along Commonwealth Avenue. The site was chosen as the venue of the protest action because President Aquino was on his way there to inaugurate some Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) companies.

Students marching in protest saw the reduced budget for education, while across the UP Ayala Hub where offices of major BPOs are located, cannot but be the best (worst?) metaphor for the state of our education today.

Here we are, producing as many graduates of biology, nursing, accounting, law, political science, etc., who, for lack of work opportunities here in their chosen fields, eventually become telephone operators, taking calls, inquiries and complaints from angry and, at times, abusive people from other countries. This seems to be the fate of graduates who take on the track of call center agents to answer correspondence from all over the world. Their corporations reduce their cost of doing business by outsourcing client services to low-income countries like ours.

As a situation that provides the best possible investments as it pays the biggest returns, it has been proven many times that investments in human capital produces not only a well-trained, skilled workforce but also an engaged, creative and innovative populace that can effectively compete with their counterparts anywhere in the world.

Much reform is necessary, not just in reorienting the school years, as the Department of Education (DepEd) proposal, but also in improving when is probably the most critical factor that accounts for effective learning, which is the mastery of the subject matters by the learners.

UP community wages one of many protest rallies against cuts in budget allocation for state colleges and universities. INQ 7 12/9/10

Yet even as we pay attention to the insensitive expenditures for government-owned and -controlled corporations of the pork barrel of nearly 300 legislators, and compare these with the paltry amount given to education, which deserves no shreds of our people, more strong 100 million.

If we do not adequately invest in human capital now, we must be prepared for the consequences that will inevitably follow.

—EUGENE "EK" TAGUIWALO
EPI 6, Amelia Ave.,
Makati City

'Open skies': attack cause of real problem

PLEASE ALLOW me to startle and put in error, not a statement or view which was quoted in the Inquirer's Dec. 10 editorial.

The exact words was made during the time Inq conducted last Dec. 1 by the House transportation committee on two proposed bills on "open skies." I was asked whether the proposals would benefit airlines or overall economy of the country. (Some news reports said this would double arrivals or even 5 million in a very short time.)

My response (as quoted by the Inquirer) was about the likely outcome (placement) and increase in the number of flights and tourists to the Philippines. I never opposed "open skies." In fact, I support it as we have benefitted in some cases with the open skies between Cebu 2/F and 020 a, in line with the ASEAN-ASEA (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-Sun Asean Economic Area) negotiated and made our bilateral partners (United States, Vietnam, Bahrain and, lately, China, and soon with Saudi Arabia). The gauge is the use of my position for the empowerment hearing was: the foreign airlines' alleged lack of air access or traffic rights to the country is not the primary reason flights and routes or trends are low (comparative to the number of seats currently allowed in our air agreements and routes) arrivals in our neighboring countries), it is the reasons on economic factors in our government should address at this time. These issues have been in the news recently—common carriers on, grant Philippine Airlines and the DOJ less... airlines request on the cost of doing business here, adding to the problems are the lack of infrastructure and support facilities (even OIG services) in airports outside Manila (hence, given the current liberal policy, the low utilization of our airports and the abovementioned airport taxation issues), are important areas that hampered bilateral talks will not guarantee that the number of flights will increase, contrary to the representation of some people. Reorganizing the real problems can apply solve the current ills and save us much time and effort.

I hope this letter (opinion of my statements can be given space by the Inquirer because I want to see more flights to the provinces serving tourists destinations directly and helping narrow the development gap. I also want the unqualified success of PNoy.

—FERNANDO P. PERFECTO, JR.
deputy executive director
Civil Aeronautics Board,
Old Min Road, Pasay City

ATTENTION
Publish a picture of your
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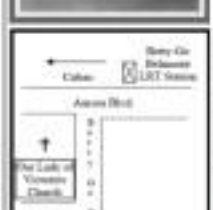
CLASSIFIEDS

Pray for the Philippines!

Traditional Tridentine Latin Mass
(Every 4:30 AM from December 16 to 24)

Our Lady of Victories Church wishes to share more widely the incalculable riches of the immemorial Tridentine Mass. Come with your family and friends to experience the splendor and beauty of the traditional Catholic Liturgy. Come to worship Jesus amidst the solemnity of the age old Roman rite of the Catholic Church. Come to adore in spirit and in truth, in sacred polyphony and Gregorian chant as we prepare to receive the Word made flesh in the Holy Eucharist this Christmas season.



"Today with the introduction of many Reproductive Health bills in Congress, our Faith again is being threatened by the ominous danger of being overcome by the Culture of Death. And we would like to strongly recommend to you that we approach our Lady, our Blessed Mother and show our great devotion and fidelity to Her by praying the rosary everyday and ask her to protect the Philippines and ask her Son's divine intervention so that these destructive forces of death threatening our people through this anti-natalist, anti-life, and anti-family legislation will not succeed."

Archbishop Paciano B. Aniceto, Chairman, ECFL-CBCP

For inquiries call tel. nos. 725-3820 / 4131670, telefax 7256725, or email OLVC123@gmail.com, or by postal mail to Our Lady of Victories Church
2 Cannon Road, New Manila, Quezon City 1112

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
REGIONAL BAR AND BAR RECEIPTS BOARD
Northern Luzon Region
Room 01 Building, National Road, Baguio City
Tel. No. 442-5288

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that MR. PETER C. LIM, President, CEO, Multilink Resources, Incorporated, with principal office at Mountain Province and Benguet Mining and Land Use Regulatory Board, a duly organized corporation for the sale of multilink multilateral (for Cruise and Tour) with Certificate of Registration No. CS200911 and Tax Identification No. 201-...-000, with the application to use name in their Multilink Resources, Incorporated, and that the registration statement and all relevant documentation for the Securities and Exchange Commission during business hours by any person having legal interest therein until the proper application is made. Any person who has any objection to the application and licensing of the project may file his/her objection in writing with the Licensing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Mountain Province, Lacanduli Road, Baguio City, not later than fifteen (15) days from publication of the publication.

City of Baguio, Philippines, this day of December 20 10.

(Sgd.) ERNESTO P. SALAZAR
Regional Director

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need a job?

Across the NATION
Associate Editor Tony Bergonia

Woman kidnapped, granddad shot dead

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The rejoicing over the release in Marawi City of two Mindanao State University (MSU) students by their kidnappers was cut short by a new kidnapping here yesterday.

Police said gunmen stormed the house of their victim, a 21-year-old woman, and killed her grandfather while forcing her into a getaway vehicle.

Senior Supt. Edwin Enriquez, acting city police chief, said the seven gunmen had apparently pre-identified their target, arriving at the residence of the Jeppaldat family on Kilometer 20 in Barangay Manicahan here.

Descompo said three of the men went into the house and beat up Jeppaldat before dragging their victim, identified only as Jocelyn, to the group's shot dead Jesus Jeppaldat, 72, grandfather of their captive, Mary Ciris Guanzon.

Policemen who rushed to the scene gave chase but failed to catch up with the suspects.

The new kidnapping case followed the release on Tuesday of the two MSU students and a Muslim school principal by their kidnappers.

Al Rasheed Gakabisul, Basilan vice governor, said principal Cecilia Bonus was released past 9 p.m. on Tuesday in the boundary of two villages in Tipo-Tipo town—Lagayan and Cabengkalan.

"A small amount of token was given to the people who took care of her (when she was abandoned there)," Sakiabdul said.

The vice governor, however, admitted that the "small amount of token" amounted to at least P200,000.

Sakiabdul's nephew Al-barkah town councilor Hajib Sakiabdul, received Bonus from the villagers.

The victim was reunited with her husband, SPO2 Nestor Bonus, an hour after her release.

Earlier that day, the two MSU students held in Piagapo, Lanao del Sur since Dec. 7 had also been freed by their kidnappers.

Freed were Sheila Mae Vidal, 18, a hotel and restaurant management student; and Akbar Balikatan, 19, an agriculture freshman.

Brig. Gen. Ilay Aziz, chief of the Army's 102nd Infantry Brigade, described the men who took the MSU students as negotiators, who easily gave in to military pressure and quickly released their captives.

But a military source told a prominent person in the province paid P200,000 as "reward and budgetary fee" for the release of the students.

Also on Tuesday, pastor ordinance Edgar Canjan walked to his freedom after being allegedly kidnapped by a grandson of a former Lanao governor.

Ando said Canjan was released following negotiations with the kidnappers allegedly led by Ali Dagalangit, a grandson of retired police officer Pfc. Ignito Dagalangit, in Lumba Bayabao, Lanao del Sur.

Canjan, 27, was in Cotabato in Cagayan de Oro City when snatched on Dec. 11.

Ando said the military and the police were investigating the case in Canjan to determine the motive for the abduction.

But he acknowledged that kidnapping for ransom has become a lucrative source of money for some groups in Mindanao. Jaime S. Alipala and Richel V. Umel, Inquirer Mindanao

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE
A statue in front of the Davao City Hall serves to remind visitors of a continuing search for peace, not only in Mindanao, but in the entire country. JOVELYN GALLEGO/INQUIRER MINDANAO

In laid-back Palawan, escalator makes debut

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Architecture and tourism traffic are building up in this city's downtown over a small and a contraption that came to Palawan for the first time—an escalator.

The Unicorp Shopping Mall, a newly constructed four-story commercial center, became an instant hit, attracting hordes of mostly curious onlookers eager to get a free ride on its escalator.

This city, marketed as a "city in a forest," has come of age from a quaint backpacker paradise to a quaint backpacker paradise with an escalator for all shopping mall.

"So many people, but they came not to shop but just to ride the escalator," an elderly shopper complained.

A female guard assists customers in taking their excitement between floors. She had her hands full discouraging school children from making joy-rides.

"A lot of people have tripped over the escalator because they didn't know how to ride it. How when I am posted, at least 20 people have tripped over," said watchman.

Bauan's post is obviously one of the most physically challenging, as the line to ride only means of children from nearby schools coming in just to frolic in the automated stairs.

Bella Espinosa, 38, and a long-time local resident, brought her four-year-old son to the biggest place in town and created a bottleneck when she took some time to step into the escalator.

"I'm afraid my son will get caught," she said, adding that she had been living in Palawan all her life and had not been outside of the province where such a facility is in her concern.

Bauan said many people from the province's far-flung municipalities who had come to the city came by to the new shopping mall just to look around.

Isolated from the Luzon mainland for many years and one of the least developed areas of the country, Dalaman and its capital have been more known for their pristine natural attractions. Rudyard D. Araki, Inquirer Southern Luzon

PMA lightning strike: 1 student killed, 1 injured

BAGUIO CITY—A lightning bolt struck two college students strolling at the Philippine Military Academy grounds in Fort Del Pilar here on Tuesday, killing one of them.

The bolt threw Michelle Quirio a short distance away from the Rellex Point at 3 p.m. and she could not be revived by doctors at the Fort del Pilar Station Hospital. The place is popular among tourists because it displays old military vehicles and cannons.

Rachelle Mesina, Quirio's companion, survived and is in stable condition, said Capt. Jigger Lyanne Flores, PMA spokesperson.

The victim, born from Isabela, was an honor of the University of Baguio. Their parents had already been informed about the accident, Flores said.

At 10 a.m. on Wednesday, the hospital received Mesina's new parents.

Quirio's remains had been placed under the custody of the Baguio Memorial Chapels (BMC) for forensic examination by the city's medico-legal officer. Her parents from Benito Soliven, Isabela, have yet to claim her body, BMC officials said.

Seth Gobilo, a professional photographer who was at the Pilot when the lightning struck, said it was thrilling that afternoon and power at the academy fluctuated whenever thunder rolled.

"I was shooting [photos of] cadets at Abdulwar Hall [which is about 2 km away from Rellex Point] but we were immediately alerted about the accident. People near the area saw the bolt strike ground," he said.

"Michelle was seriously hit ... Even after several attempts by the attending doctors to revive her, she died on or about 5:10 p.m. of the same day. Michelle, who was knocked down, only suffered minor injury," Flores said. Vincent Cabreza and Zenon Chapap, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Eruption rumor creates panic in volcano-less Nueva Vizcaya

By Philrin Gayoso
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—A typhoon Monday warned some residents here got agitated by reports of an impending volcanic eruption following a series of strong earthquakes that rocked the province that morning.

Students in public and private schools in this capital town were sent home after Monday's magnitude 5.1 earthquake, forced aftershocks followed the quake.

By 10 a.m., parents were rushing to schools to fetch their children, while office workers in both public and private sectors were encouraging to go home, as news spread that Mt. Dingino in Bagabag town was about to erupt.

"After the magnitude 5.1 magnitude earthquake, at 10:42 a.m. today (Monday), Nueva Vizcaya, which epicenter lies 6 km southwest of Bayombong, another shocking observation from the Doña Cora Nueva Vizcaya revealed that a mountain near Sitio South Bagabag is emitting smoke, tempered the possible eruption," a text message read.

Doña Cora is a private radio communication group based in Bayombong town, members of which include provincial and town officials, businessmen and residents.

"We have received reports that people were starting to go to shattered, including the governor and provincial [police] director. Many had started to panic buying," said Evelina Agnasan, action officer of the provincial disaster risk reduction management council.

Agnasan dismissed the rumors of a volcanic explosion, expressing dismay that Doña Cora members peddled the report without validating it from authorized sources.

She said the quake and its aftershocks were tectonic in origin, or caused by movements in the earth's crust, and did not involve any volcanic activity.

"In the first place, we do not have any volcano in Nueva Vizcaya. If [the quakes] were volcanic-related, the earthquakes must have been much stronger," she said.

But other police officers went to the area and checked on the suspected volcanic activity, it turned out that the source of the smoke was caused by charcoal production in the area.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

E-mail at: [illegible]
Mobile: [illegible]

Edna Dan Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Florelou G. Sabornamo

After 'Reming,' signs of new life in village

By Gina V. Rodriguez
Legazpi City

USED TO THE rains that normally come in November, Virginia Ayala, 64, takes advantage of the sudden spell of sunshine one Thursday morning to help her husband clear their rice field in Purok 4 in Barangay Padang for the next planting season.

Padang, 7.5 kilometers from the city proper of Legazpi, is the last village in the northern part of Albay's capital. It is where Virginia, "Inyang" to friends, was raised by her parents and continues to call her home.

Since the devastation wrought by Supertyphoon "Reming" on Nov. 30, 2006, only a little more than half of the 3,000 people will stay in the predominantly rice farming area, a 313-hectare landscape subdivided into Purok 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

DIOSDADO BALLESTEROS lost his wife and six of his eight children when Typhoon "Reming" struck. His two sons remarried and now has a son, 1 year and 2 months old.

The rest of the population, especially those from Puroks 1 and 2, whose homes were buried by mudflow cascading from the slopes of Mayon Volcano during Reming, are in the resettlement area in Barangay Vinisan in the southern part of Legazpi.

Barangay records show that almost 200 homes were buried, more than 300 people killed and 60 bodies recovered in the aftermath of the disaster.

The main settlement of Padang, where the barangay hall, chapel and elementary school are found, is 8 km away from the volcano's summit to the southeast flank.

Like a desert

At the height of the supertyphoon, which provincial disaster experts said dumped an unprecedented 667 millimeters of rainfall, the Padang River traversing the community was barely silted with lahar flows from Mayon.

How can Inyang forget the images of the morning after Reming — a grey landscape with rarry a house standing or dwellers in sight, except for felled trees and broken branches strewn about? Lahar submerged the bridge leading to the community and swamped Puroks 1 and 2, and half of Purok 4 with muds and rocks as big as trucks.

"It was like a desert," she says of the bleak scene unmixed first extended to the area on the fringes of the village and whose shoreline was littered with dead animals—bloated and stiffened carcasses of dogs, pigs, goats and even carabaos and cows.

She recounts encountering three bodies laid on the floor of the chapel—those of a man in his 20s, a woman in her 40s and a young boy whose left foot was chewed on by a dog, or so said some neighbors.

Rushing to the houses of a policeman and a village councilman, where some survivors took refuge, in the midst inside in giving first aid, Inyang saw reddened eyes that could hardly open from particles of sand, dust and rocks.

"It was a picture of despair, aggravated by the last of loved ones," she remembers.

A FARMER tills the field in Barangay Padang in Legazpi City four years after Supertyphoon "Reming" struck the village.

In less than three days, the stench of death resembling that of decaying rats swamped the village, she adds.

Three days, which the sky drew and lightning flares, until when the rain begins to pour incessantly, Inyang is jolted into recalling the scenes of the morning after. She starts monitoring her prayers that "it does not happen again."

Moving on

Barangay chief Manuel Alagabare Sr., who is now on his second term, says Padang only accepted resettlement for residents of Purok 1 and 2. He adds that the village declined the city's offer of total resettlement to the southern barangays.

"We have to stand up, move on with our lives as we still have families," he reasons, here cautiously telling the hands of families during reminders he conducted around the village.

He points to signs of renewed life in the community—from the 20-meter concrete bridge over Padang River, which was just launched in September, to the four water collection tanks constructed in key areas that serve to stop stream water for the residents' possible drinking needs.

Outside the lot of the elementary school, one of the cisterns adjacent to a row of young coconut trees is found with cars beside.

Along the road on the way to Padang, a memorial stone that looks up to the sky in remembrance of those who died and survived Reming greets a visitor. Its panels sculpt a parol with bright red tips and the photos underneath the cross is festooned with blooms of vivid yellow.

Nearby, in the largely uninhabited Purok 2, four graves remain badly on tall grasses that have grown relentlessly.

Across the road still stands the two-story concrete house whose rooftop once served as a lifeline to some villagers at the height of Reming. Its facade is now dotted by a leafy tree.

Alagabare adds that a road now leads to the old Mayon golf course in Purok 4, while monthly fund is ready for the deepening of the riverbed of San Isidro that runs its course on the side of the barangay hall in Purok 1.

These days, disaster-warning signals are routinely followed by the people. A traditional metal bell in the chapel is rung earlier to tell them to prepare to leave. One long ring is a warning for them to immediately evacuate, Alagabare says.

Sounding alarm bells is part of the regular affairs of Padang. Other than that, twice a week, during meetings, Inyang keeps to her other duties as a health worker, a post she has held since the 1980s.

Midmorning every Thursday, she is in a huddle with other women folk in the village chapel, which from running together for a brief Bible study, the moment help each rendered in making regular payments for individual livelihood loans given by the social action arm of the Catholic Church.

Inyang says no cause to change the pattern of her days in Padang, four years since Reming struck. She takes comfort in that her labors on the rice land will surely yield stalks of ripened grains come harvest time in March or April.

ONE of the houses buried by mudflow from Mayon Volcano in Barangay Padang is shown in this photo taken in January 2007.

Vizconde reminded of divine justice

From page A1

from a justice that some of his colleagues were being paid off, an alleged announcement from Webb's father Weddie that his son would be out soon, and the group's release at around 4 p.m. Tuesday, even before partners in the case had received a copy of the Supreme Court decision.

Asked whether he would agree to see Hubert Webb, Vizconde said, "I cannot face a liar."

But he said the family was free to do what it wished to free Webb's name. The family had threatened to file charges against prosecution witness Jessica Alfaro for purportedly giving false information to the court that led to Webb's conviction 15 years ago.

When asked if he would help Alfaro defend herself, Vizconde replied in the affirmative, saying **he acted much to the woman** whose testimony weighed heavily in his decision to keep the trial.

Family and friends gathered at the graves of Vizconde's wife and children for a Mass at 5 p.m.

"We are not without hope. We are not without help. God is with us. Let us turn to Him more," Fr. Bernard Inocio said at the start of the Mass.

Bureau reminded the gathering to remember The departed by how they lived, and not by how they died. He condemned the brutal killings and prayed that the family be given strength to pursue justice.

At the close of the Mass, the priest blessed the graves as Vizconde stood praying by his side.

'For how much?'

Talking to reporters, Vizconde once again called on the Supreme Court justices to bring his family's killers to justice and to make him believe that they had made the right decision.

He considered the acquittal of Hubert Webb and six others, and said justices had been pressured and bribed by money to decide in their favor.

"My question to [is] how much?" Vizconde said. "Justice here is for the wealthy only. What justice can small people like us hope for when the accused are all well-off?"

Higher court

At the acquittal of Webb and company left the nation teeming after had laundered the accusers, some Catholic bishops spoke of a higher court that dispenses "divine justice."

> *President worried 20-year prescription period about to end*
>
> PRESIDENT Aquino yesterday expressed concern over having just one year remaining in the 20-year prescription period for the perpetrators of the 1991 Vizconde massacre.
>
> "[It's] really difficult to think about having lost your entire family and you thought you already had justice, and now we're back to square one," the President said of the grieving Lanzo Vizconde.
>
> "If the decision of the Supreme Court is correct, there is just one more year in the prescription period where-in can we bring to justice who the real perpetrators are... I really sympathize with [the Vizconde]," he added.
>
> Aquino's spokesperson Abigail Valte said the administration expected the last enforcement agencies to bring the killers of Salvello, Carmela and Jennifer Vizconde to justice.
>
> Norman Bordadora

"The Supreme Court is not the last court," Bishop Antonio Ango said in an interview over the Church-run Radio Veritas yesterday. "We have [other] court called divine justice because ... our capability as human beings is limited."

Ango, chair of the Catholic Bishops' Episcopal Commission on Prayers and Pastoral Care, said that while the high court had found Webb et al. "legally innocent," it had no way of determining their "moral guilt or innocence."

He said that there was a distinction between legal and moral guilt, and that the latter was committed and established by the courts through evidence.

"The Supreme Court is human, so it can only establish legal guilt. But moral guilt is beyond its competence," Ango said.

He added: "It is only God who has a say on one's moral guilt.

"Real justice will not come from a human court, only from God."

God in control

Capiz Archbishop Ulpiano Cardinal Vidal said time took Webb's help in favor of Inspector Jess.

"The first thing we should do is to pray for the family, that God will give them strength and courage. After all, God is in control," Cardinal Vidal said, also over Radio Veritas.

He said that in times of despair and suffering, "just let God take care of all of us."

Marbel Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez expressed sadness at the Supreme Court decision and also spoke about a higher justice.

"I was telling the ordinary people here that this is our legal system—even if you already know who the culprits are, but if you don't have the evidence ... then you have always divine justice," Gutierrez said.

Ango said that in his experience working with the Church's prison ministry over-time, there were times that prisoners were found "legally guilty" but "morally innocent."

"There are many people who

Ruby ransom after their phone exchange, President Jose Ramos of the Republic of Honduras called the earthlord. It turned out that Reagan had called him in great refuge at the Mansion. The Honduran national counsel thumbed it down as a prank.

"Tell the cardinal, we animal accept your President and his family," the Honduran head of state said. But if you insist, as a Catholic president, I'll accept him."

"But Marcos needs special medical attention. He cannot be brought to the US," the cardinal was grateful. But he had to point this out to the president of the democratic state in Central America.

A half hour after the cardinal

and's conversation with the Honduran president, he learned that Reagan had communicated with Clark Air Base to pick up the Marcoses from Malacañang and fly them to Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu, Hawaii, in a C-130 cargo.

"Please one told where he was going," the cardinal told the location at the time of this interview in 1986.

"There was never any doubt about [where], that the Marcoses thought [of, as they said] they were flying to Hawaii."

As soon as he knew for sure the Marcoses were out of the Palace and Reno out of the country, the cardinal said a prayer of thanksgiving.

Cardinal Sin looked after Marcoses' safety, talked to Reagan

From page A1

REAGAN: Before Lent, we heard the beautiful Mass was in 1986.

ever rule.

Yet, the man who ousted Marcos fretted about seeing him and his family bent to the pressures of people marching here in early March following.

This is his story.

It was early morning, Feb. 25, 1986, the last day of the peaceful revolt that ousted on Feb. 22. The cardinal, who had been the archbishop of Manila since 1974, was concerned for the safety of Marcos and his wife, children and grandchildren. He shared his concerns with US ambassador Stephen Bosworth, who was then visiting him in his official residence at Shaw Boulevard.

At dawn that same day Col. Rolando Bautista of the 5th Fighter Wing with six F-20 planes had defected to the Aguinaldo Camp. This was the fourth day of the revolt. Already 58 persons of the officers and men had defected the Marcos corral.

Talking to Reagan

On the first day of the revolt, the cardinal worried about the security of Ferdie and Bautista, sent the two good men back up inside Camp Crame with Cheta Ea, the cardinal commended the people. And they came, about a million that first night. And they did not stop coming until they were back their freedom.

Just when victory was at the people's doorstep, the cardinal felt he had to help secure the Marcoses. He asked Bosworth to phone US President Ronald Reagan to convince him that the Marcoses had to be rescued. Otherwise, they would be torn to pieces by the people's wrath. Bosworth handed the phone over to the cardinal so that he could himself express his concern to Reagan.

The cardinal stressed to the US president that Marcos "is a very sick man" so he had to go on the United States for proper medical treatment. The cardinal recalled to the listeners that Marcos had undergone a "delicate" heart surgery in Honolulu.

Honduran president calls

Reagan's instrumental to **appear disappointed the cardinal.**

And so Reagan and the cardinal's conversation with the Honduran president, he learned that Reagan had communicated with Clark Air Base to pick up the Marcoses from Malacañang and fly them to Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu, Hawaii, in a C-130 cargo.

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Marcos told this reporter he had a mission from God

From page A1

Explaining why he was seeking a new mandate, Marcos told me that he had a mission from God to redress the economic "in different souls ... inspired to desperate hopelessness and exhorting to do anything about it."

I was then Philippine bureau chief of the New York-based United Press International (UPI). The piece of mine quoted in the opposition in the newspaper I joined two decades later to condemn a piece for its silver jubilee package of reminiscences.

The day Marcos outlined his divine mission to reform [a] million American dictators [of the number has almost doubled since], taxpayers wondering Halley's Comet hurtle toward Earth predicted 1986 would be ahead year for world headsite—the Filipino investigation objective of every reporter.

The story did not escape the eagle eyes of the bureau's executive editor in chief, the late Luis Nieves, who wrote tongue-in-cheek in his top-ed column.

"Normally, I did a survey to find out if people appreciated God for that and the first person I met was Fidel Ramos, a reporter or on his way to work in Saudi Arabia.

"Fidel," I asked, did you know that God appointed Ferdinand Marcos to rule us?"

"Of course," replied Fidel. "Why do you think I am here today? I want to be in Saudi until God changes his mind."

Mistaken from on high are exceeded by mere serious ways, but the media-churned impressions and women of the bureau, Joe Burgos of Malaya and the so-called "renegade press" certainly exuded outsized patronage.

Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan and the new-era of "glasnost" in no small measure also contributed to the initiatives.

And, of course, Jaime Cardinal Sin, the portly archbishop of Manila who by then had eschewed his policy of "critical collaboration" with the dictator.

All conspired to torpedo the last vestige revealed to me.

The alternative press

The fourteen, along with the alternative press, reported shenanigans that had conquered the country among the breathtaking races of Asia, along with Bangladesh and Burma.

Who stories stolen Dean Rusk's telephone or phoned to sensational official sources about how Marcos' cronies had ripped off the treasury that were consistently ignored by the mainstream press engaged in "self censorship" one print for the first time.

There was a dispatch that said investigations in the US Congress had found that $100 million in military aid had been squandered and could not be found. And how Washington's defense agency recycled a New York Times report in 1977 by the Pulitzer prize winning correspondent Henry Kamm about Marcos' false medals.

Marcos had built a legend as a World War II hero who won from the US and Philippine governments 36 medals—more than Audie Murphy's 27. It was one of the myths, perverted in his authorized biography by Hartzell Spence, that had helped catapult him to the presidency in 1965.

A monstrosity in one, Marcos expelled on his plans to carry out a "manifesto for greatness" in his inaugural address, where the local version of Camelot established in the country where the US think tank said the next economic miracle in Asia would take place.

Marcos won an unprecedented reelection four years later, but he declared martial law on Sept. 23, 1972, a year before the expiration of his mandatory term.

That was just hours after I had cabled my story on the UPI foreign desk in New York about the "ambush" of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile. Enrile would later co-admit that the ambush to the midst of a rash of bombings in the capital was faked to justify the imposition of the emergency.

Leftist, rightist plot

In declaring martial law, Marcos cited a leftist and rightist conspiracy to topple the government following a spate of leftist-led debate-spanning mass rallies and the night when the United Central Luzon title a huge take. This was before the state-hostage-seized the navy commercial broken and Tropical Storm "Dinday" that inundated the capital in a flash flood.

The Marcos then left under the envisaged dictatorship of President and Imelda.

Partly-time Marcos called a coup election. The Philippine economy had continued by 6.6 percent, a US$ billion foreign debt had ballooned to $26 billion from what the nation would bound to poverty amid reports of Imelda's profligate lifestyle. Madonna bore into the land some in the post-Funk era extravagance, crossing presidents Marcos and Mobutu.

Communist guerrillas, described as the new Robert Burgos, tapped at the gates of Malacañang.

Col. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, head of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) formed at the defense ministry, was being hunted in the foreign press. Now a senator, Honasan was portrayed as a dashing commando who spearheaded the failed August coup gets with a jet parked around his neck.

RAM was formed in prison camps the capital that Marcos was seriously ill with lupus erythematosus—a debilitating kidney problem—and Imelda was locked in a power struggle with military chief Gen. Fabian Ver and Enrile.

Honasan's alienated coup angered the breakaway of Enrile and Gen. Fidel Ramos and the people power meeting, announced by Cardinal Sin, that came in first events.

Events building up to the People Power Revolution of 1986 were chronicled in the [illegible] coup attempts in Iran. That it was all owed to publish these stories in the run up to the balloting was a sign of fresh winds blowing.

Testing the limits

Joe Burgos, a star police reporter in the journalistic hero stories, had published two books, but declined nationality putting out the opposition fortnightly Business in 1977.

Testing the limits of Marcos' tolerance, he published a new one of Cito Tabo Medina story by retired Col. Romulo de Gallego ex-Honorable Dominador Aytona who drum his newspaper and hailed him to the Constabulary stockade, along with former Sen. Francisco "Soc" Rodrigo, a columnist, and several others.

Burgos was held a month later with another Malaya columnist, Philaya. "All I ate is a just and so," he said. "If you tell me that I cannot print the [illegible] then I am nothing."

Newspapers in a period of [illegible] and [illegible] gin-ins Burgos had time [illegible] one of his presidency. He retained it and showed his distain not only to the Filipino [illegible] but his own people when he announced before a US TV audience that he was calling [illegible] "my people."

Journalists were among those clapped in jail at the outset of martial law.

A young radio station news director recalled an incident a year [illegible] when [illegible] gin-ins [illegible] of media people where the martial law rumors first surfaced. That was after the death in June 1973 of former President Carlos P. Garcia, whose coffin was brought to the Libingan ng Mga Bayani national cemetery. The director was told Marcos tasked him, pointed to a group of reporters covering the event and remarked: "Look at those guys. They don't even understand what I'm saying. They don't even understand what I'm trying to do."

The American hand

As I sensed months the Palace study room for my interview with Marcos, a passerby of visitors came and went, including Benny Bufranda, the US ambassador to the Philippines when it was placed under martial law.

I never got around to ask what Bufranda's visit was about. Was Marcos any Gen. Ver about Marcos changed the emergency in 1972, Bufranda had gotten hold of Presidential No. 1081—the martial law decree—a week earlier and had gone to the Palace room and read Marcos into submission—a plot that was ignored.

Many at the time were speculating that some of the opposition leaders who escaped the martial law crackdown through the southern backdoor and [illegible] up in the United States were obviously tipped off. They later joined the anti-Marcos movements of what Malacañang derisively called the "weak nationalists" and "silk stockinged revolutionaries."

Martial Law—the Americans were in his pocket. The United States was fighting a war in Vietnam and needed the spreading bases in the Philippines that served as its logistics hub.

The American hand in the Marcos takeover was pretty much evident right down to his final hours in Malacañang. He had called Washington to propose a real time with Cesarean Aquino, but rejected by Reagan's close confidante, Sen. Paul Laxalt—"cat and dog thumb; the time has come." After a moment of silence, Marcos remarked, "I am so very, very disappointed."

Hours later, US helicopters airlifted Marcos out of the besieged Palace in the middle of the night for an exile's life in Hawaii, where he died in September 1989.

The era of glasnost

The year the dictator called a snap election was an altogether different world. Marcos' Americans were engaged in moves termed "glasnost" and "perestroika"—transparency and restructuring—in the Kremlin that led to the dismantling of the Iron Curtain but years later, Washington could not be seen as meddling dictators.

And so Marcos was forced to call the election as demands for his ouster heightened after the assassination of popular opposition leader Ninoy Aquino in 1983. His widow Cimaron had mounted a spirited campaign to oust him as the economy teetered and the communist insurgency a restive army was building great strength.

Marcos didn't look in very good health when I talked to him. His face was puffy and his eyes were bleary. "Do you think he is sick?" he asked me, pointing to a photograph on the wall. "I am not sick," he said. "Marcos is never sick. I am exercising every day now."

He said though that one wounds continued to [illegible] him.

Elegance, ransacce

The ensuing days would show how vexed, he had become, despite Malacañang's effort to portray him in audiotape cassette books as the messianic nationalist of Rambo who was then thrusting his cronyists in Mendiola's moore beams.

The traditional Christmas party in Malacañang was called off for the first time in the 20-year rule. A notable recalls the had never seen the likes of so much "elegance and romance" since the last yearend holiday ball the Marcoses hosted at the glittering Malacañang grounds.

Marcos had to be bodily carried to address in his campaign sorties, which at times had to prop up his cronies to flash the Save Society "V" for victory sign with his fingers. In one such, waist movement...an aide went up with the "up power" promulgated. By then, food had given up on it.

POC tells Fifa Araneta is legit, vows to keep team intact

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee yesterday submitted its recognition of the Philippine Football Federation group led by Mariano Araneta to the International Football Federation (Fifa) in the hopes of gaining the latter's sanction for the troubled association.

POC chair Monico Puentevella has also assured the Fifa bosses they won't be delinquent in their payments to the world football body.

"I assured them that it is the Philippine Olympic Committee which finally decides who gets accredited and who does not," said Puentevella during the team's sendoff Tuesday for the AFF Suzuki Cup semifinals in Jakarta. "Because they touched the semifinals, the country should reward them and not disbarred them. This is not the way we reward our athletes."

Puentevella said he assured national football coach Simon McMenemy that they just focus on the matches and not worry about the politics within the PFF.

The comments came on the heels of reports that Jose Mari Martinez, the beleaguered PFF president who is still recognized by the Fifa, has plans to replace McMenemy and Dodd as new bosses.

Puentevella said the Fifa is now reviewing the papers submitted by the POC endorsing Araneta's group.

During its congress on Nov. 27, the PFF board elected Araneta as president after ousting Jose Mari Martinez due to road face-offendedness. The board has accused Martinez of malfeasance and corruption, with the team coming out with a statement saying it hasn't received a single centavo out of the fish financial assistance extended by the Fifa to the PFF.

But Fifa officials continue to recognize Martinez as a technicality. The election was not included in the congress' agenda.

Puentevella and Araneta will be joining the team today in Jakarta and plan to take this matter up officially with the Asian Football Federation.

Meanwhile, 2002 Busan Asian Games gold medalist Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, appointed by the Olympic Council of Asia as member of the athletes committee, and Puentevella as member of the international relations committee.

Underdog booters take on host Indonesians

By Cuskelf P. Tupaz

THE PHILIPPINES' goalkeeper Neil Etheridge (left) will be the last line of a stingy defense that has taken the FFI boosters this far in the Suzuki Cup.

THE TEAM that has left the country in awe of its favorite euphoria once again escapes the underdog role that had served it so good-stead in the past two weeks.

The Philippines faces Indonesia tonight in the first of the two legs of the AFF Suzuki Cup semifinals before an expected crowd of close to 100,000 at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in downtown Jakarta.

The 7 p.m. match (6 p.m. in Manila) will technically be a "home" game for the Filipinos, who were unable to play in the country because of the supposed lack of a stadium suitable for a tournament of the Suzuki Cup's magnitude.

The second leg will also be held in the same venue on Sunday.

"It's a tough task made even tougher by the fact that the crowd will be behind (Indonesia)," said team manager Dan Palami. "But the many heroes that we have do make country behind us as well."

"What we have done the past year boils down to these two games. The players are ready. They have worked hard to reach this level," added Palami, who has handwelled the team since last year.

Indonesia has won all of its three matches against the Philippines in the competition by a combined score of 9-0. The Filipinos were handed their worst beating in the tournament by the Indonesians, 5-13, in 2002.

Records show that the Indonesians have beaten the Philippines 16 times in their 17 meetings with the only other result ending in a new draw.

"Obviously they have the advantage and our biggest challenge will be the crowd," FFI skipper Aly Borromeo said the boosters before the team left for the Indonesian capital Tuesday night.

Basking in the glow of their historic result in the group stage, the Filipinos managed just a couple of practice sessions while in Manila after arriving from Hanoi, where they beat defending champion Vietnam, 2-1, and drew with Singapore and Myanmar to make the semifinals for the first time.

"We did not have a complete squad to training, but that's how we've prepared for the tournament. Before us I don't think it's going to be a problem," Borromeo said. "We definitely have to work on our finish."

They are going to need it.

Indonesia, which has played with so much flair on attack in the tournament that pundits have tipped the perennial underachieving squad to go all the way after killing them in the finals three times, has scored 13 goals to just three games in the tournament.

Five players, including the creative linchpin under Irfan Bachdim and star forward Bambang Pamungkas, have scored two goals each on their way to making the Merah Putih (Red and White) team in the competition.

The Filipinos, on the other hand, are the less defensive team in the tournaments, conceding just one goal in three group games.

They stifle opponents' attacks by closing down the spaces on the attacking third and rely on goalkeeper Neil Etheridge to quell some of the forays, while trying to catch their rivals on the counterattack.

"I think we always carry a threat going forward," said Philippines English coach Simon McMenemy.

Against Indonesia, the look four of Borromeo, Rob Gier, Hoy Jonsson and Anton del Rosario will have the unenviable task of defending Bachdim, Cristian Gonzales, a Uruguayan who was cut-rolled to play for the Indonesians under the naturalization, and Ruthedi.

The load on attack will be carried by Phil Younghusband and Ian Araneta, who are tasked up front as the tour of the team defends.

"If we hold our own just like always and stick to the game plan, we might pull off a surprise," said Borromeo.

IN THE KNOW

Away goals and the perils of playing 'home' game abroad

AS IT IS, the Philippines have tremendous odds against Indonesia in the two-leg semifinals of the AFF Suzuki Cup.

But the chances of the Filipino boosters' advancing to the finals got even slimmer when it wasn't given the chance to host one of the two legs of the semifinals because of the supposed absence of a stadium fit for international standards.

As a result, the Philippines will play in "home" game at the 88,000-seater Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta, which can easily be filled up by a rabid Indonesian fan base.

Nothing the homefield advantage may not only deprived Filipinos of watching the team play in the country but also gave the Indonesians a huge edge since if they score tonight, their goals will be considered "away" goals in the same way if the Filipinos score on Sunday.

Away goals carry more weight when the aggregate ends up tied after the two legs. If the Philippines wins 2-1 tonight and loses 1-0 on Sunday, the aggregate is an even 2-1 but Indonesia still will advance because of its away goal.

If the score and the away goals are the same in the two legs, the second leg will be extended to extra time. If the score remains after extra time, the dreaded penalty shoot-out will be played.

Cuskelf P. Tupaz

Orendain captures boys' tennis crown

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THERE'S NO denying Kevin Orendain this time.

Orendain overcame tough sailing in the second set but showed enough grit to beat John Kilchis, 6-1, 7-6 (7-5), yesterday and claim the boys' 18-under title of the Philippine Sports Commission-endorsed age-group tennis championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

It was a vengeful win for the 13-year-old Orendain, who lost in the final to Kilchis in the tournament's first phase last week.

In the girls' 18-under, second-seeded Jade Capadocia overwhelmed Jaiha Ann Ramos, 6-4, 7-5 Monday over 35-year-old sister and top seed Marian Jade Capadocia to clinch the championship.

It was little Jade's first title and the 17-year-old booted second players on the way to the crown, including fourth seed Samantha Espiritu, 6-4, 7-5, in the quarterfinals, and a second seed Anne Rose Castillo, 6-0, 6-2 in the semifinals.

Top seed Erika Mandamas made it back-to-back in the girls' 12-under after whipping Mary Rose Ann Jose, 6-0, 6-2. Mandamas, who walked over to the title last week, again marched in the finals when Chloe Santos defaulted in the semifinals.

Sixth seed Elmo Antero banged into the final of the boys' 16-under after downing fourth seed Jonathan Advincula, 6-4, 6-3, in the other semis.

TORONTO Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan (10) dunks over Charlotte Bobcats power forward Tyrus Thomas (right).

Kobe lifts Lakers as Bynum returns

WASHINGTON—The surging Los Angeles Lakers welcomed the return of seven-foot center Andrew Bynum by routing the injury-riddled Washington Wizards, 105-93, in the NBA Tuesday.

Kobe Bryant scored 24 points to lead the Lakers, who outscored Washington, 31-22, in the second quarter to take a 57-46 lead at halftime and never looked back.

Bryant exploded for 16 points in the third quarter as the Lakers stretched their lead to 92-70 with a period to play, sending the Verizon Center crowd heading for the exits.

Bynum saw his first action of the year following right knee surgery in July, scoring off the bench in seven seven points with four rebounds and two blocks in 17 minutes.

"Everything was said for the first game of the season," said Bynum, who averaged 18 points and 8.3 rebounds a year ago. "It was a good test but I feel great.

"I've only had about five practices so this is little bit rusty. It will take me a while to get back to my normal self.

"But I'm really, really happy to be back out there."

Los Angeles has struggled for stretches of the year under the burden with the absence of Bynum, a key component in the Lakers' championship runs over the last two years.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson was delighted to have the 23-year-old, six-year NBA veteran come off the bench and fill in for center Pau Gasol and power forward Lamar Odom.

"He gave us something we needed at the time," said Jackson.

"We had both Lamar and Pau with two fouls. I thought Andrew's offense was pretty good.

"Defensively, he got a block or two for his presence was felt. There are still some things he needs to work on. He needs to get in basketball game shape."

The Lakers (18-7) have won five of their last six and are within striking distance of the Western Conference-leading San Antonio Spurs (20-3) and Dallas Mavericks (19-5).

Bynum hit seven of 13 shots in only 24 minutes for the Lakers, who visit the Indiana Pacers on Wednesday. Odom scored 18 points while Gasol and reserve Shannon Brown each added 16.

Jackson expected Bynum to play about five more minutes of time against the Pacers.

"I'll try to work him out similar to what we did tonight," he said. "Short minutes. Relief minutes. See how he goes in the game. I was ready to put him back in if we needed to tonight. But that was a decision where we didn't have to push it down at the end." Reuters

Ming Ramos-Victor Cup lures stars

THE COUNTRY'S leading shuttlers and up-and-coming stars from the junior ranks make up the field scrapping in the Ming Ramos-Victor Stainless Open, Youth and Corporate Badminton Championships on Dec. 27 at Club 65(+) and PSC Badminton Hall at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

Multistar Ann Vernice Alcala and Super Ramona head the draw for top honors in the omnisports Open division of the event.

The tournament is the country's premier badminton championship organized by the Philippine Badminton Association—an affiliate of the Badminton World Federation and the Badminton Asia Confederation.

The PBA will actually send personnel to observe the event in line with the badminton body's program of holding the SEA BAC training camps in the country next year.

"The event aims to seek more potential players who could be tapped, trained and developed to become members of the national team," said PBA president and former Hon. Lady Amelia "Ming" Ramos.

The tournament, which offers a total prize of P500,000 plus over P450,000 worth of equipment from Victor, features five age-group classes: Under-19, Under-17, Under-15, Under-13 and Under-11 for the boys' and girls' singles and doubles events.

Pacquiao's next fight on May 7 in Vegas

By Roy Luarca

POUND-FOR-POUND king Manny Pacquiao's next fight is on May 7 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

And though Pacquiao's opponent has yet to be named, Showtime Mosley knows the short list of aspirants making a megabuck showdown with the eight-time, eight-division champion.

Pacquiao and promoter Bob Arum have met Chinese dinner Tuesday at the Shangrila Hotel in Makati and agreed upon the Filipino boxer's return to Las Vegas next year. Pacquiao's last two victories against Chatchai Joshua Clottey in March and Mexican Antonio Margarito in November were fashioned out at the Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

The original date of April 16 for Pacquiao's return to the ring was shelved because it is not pay-per-view-conducive, according to Arum.

Trainer Freddie Roach and Pacquiao have agreed to conduct half (four weeks) of the boxing(ph) representative's training in the Philippines and the other half at Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood.

Arum and Roach are in the country to attend Pacquiao's 32nd birthday bash set in Gen. Santos City.

Veterans grab Open lead

Miñoza, Pactolerin fire 68s, rekindle old rivalry

By Marang B. Castillo

ANTIPOLO—Freddie Miñoza and Robert Pactolerin, former champions in the second wind of their careers, yesterday fired four-under-par 68s to share the first round lead with obscure Orlan Sumcad and amateur Zamboanga Roy Elaban in the 94th Philippine Open.

The 30-year-old Miñoza finished birdie-birdie that made up for a horrendous double-bogey 6 on No. 16 to smash his longtime rival Pactolerin at the links after the 1990 winners gained domination of the six birdies in the back nine of Valley's rough South course here.

What made Miñoza's 32-36 round remarkable was the fact that he saw the new lawn, up-and-down layout for the first time in 19 years after he was kept out of Bombo's Pro-Am by a left ear infection.

"Sometimes, playing this way (without the benefit of a practice round) gives you the edge you need," Miñoza, a two-time winner who last played the South course when the layout last hosted the Open in 1991, told the Inquirer in Filipino.

"I'm playing well. I'm hitting the ball farther than before and I like my chances," added Miñoza, who actually played his first competitive round after arriving late Dec. 6 from a successful stint in the Champions Tour Q school.

Pactolerin, the 45-year-old playing son of Royal Golf in Zamboanga, pulled up three shots to his first four holes in the back nine, stumbled a bit on No. 16 when he missed a three-foot-tough par putt before closing a rattling, deserved 67-foot on the par-3 18th to finish off his 67-out out in any tournament this season.

"I just felt calm out there and I found the course is my thing," said Pactolerin, also the 1995 Masters champion who snapped a long seldom spell by tying Miñoza at the top of the 2016 "There's still a long way to go, and the best way to approach this [rest of the tournament] is one hole at a time."

Sumcad, a journeyman called by many as a fruitful long hitter, had an eagle-spiked, six-birdie round, all of them coming after he opened up with bogeys on Nos. 12and 13 for a 35-33 card. Sumcad's two other bogeys came on Nos. 11 and 16.

Elaban, the former Gotabang multi-way actually had the lead to himself going to the 211-yard 18th, which he reached with a superbly-struck 4-iron.

But the 23-year-old veteran hit another poor shot from just about three feet to drop into the four-way logjam and clay a stroke up on Joemari Rumbo, Rufino Bayron and defending champion Elmer Salvador, seeking to become the first man since 1999 to repeat as Open champion, and Ronie Bob charmed out bogey-free rounds, while Bayron, who won the ICTSI big have three pros up as an amateur, had five birdies against two bogeys.

Rookie pro Antonio Adolfo B was just two strokes back in 70 along with amateur and Ateneo Cavaliers player Jonathan Miguel Tabuena and four others.

Birdie Bonnie, the former national team spearhead, fired a 71 like Ramil Haera, Gene Sicnduc and amateur Carl Jamin Granapa.

The 6,900-yard layout played to par-fewest bus in the first round and was at the mercy of the wind as only 11 of 80 players mustered par or better with the next 11 players, including Antonio Miguel, lurking six strokes off the lead.

MIÑOZA: No practice

Full Scores (Leaders)
68—F. Miñoza (36-32), C. Elaban (Am) (36-32), R. Pactolerin (36-32), O. Sumcad (35-33), J. Rumbo (34-34), R. Bayron (34-34), E. Salvador (34-34), R. Bob (34-34), A. Adolfo B (34-34), J. Tabuena (Am) (34-34), C. Granapa (Am) (34-34), R. Haera (35-33), G. Sicnduc (36-32), C. Jamin (Am) (35-33), J. Granapa (Am) (35-33

SPORTS

Alaska whips Powerade for 2nd straight victory

Coach Cone declares Aces playoff-ready

By Nassy R. Cavalis

AFTER STRUGGLING for majority of the eliminations round, Alaska closed out with a second straight win which prompted coach Tim Cone to declare his Aces playoff-ready.

"We are a playoff tough team," said Cone after getting 21 points from Tyrus Hagler and 14 points and 11 rebounds from Sonny Thoss in an 86-79 decision of ninth-ner Powerade in the PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We feel like we are on even terms with anybody," Cone said after his Aces finished the round at 7-7 to possibly end up as the No. 4 seed in the quarterfinals.

"We feel we have a very good chance no matter who we play. We like our chances just for that."

The Aces used a hot third quarter to break free from the Tigers, who fanned out with a 3-13 mark, tied for the worst record with Barako Bull and out of the playoffs for the first time in 13 conferences.

Alaska will play either defending champion Barako Ace or second-darling Barangay Ginebra in the playoffs, the winning designation on the result of the Rain or Shine-Meralco contest which was still going on at press time.

The Aces will be the fourth seed's and tend up an Derby Ace's foes if the Elasto Painters triumph.

James Yap scores 18 points (Araneta Coliseum)

Sat, 6:30 — Barby Ace vs Alaska/Meralco 7:30 p.m. — Rain or Shine vs Ginebra/Air 21 vs Talk N Text/Petron Blaze

Alaska, though, will fall in the middle-ranked team for the sweet of a liberation victory, and to which case, the Aces will be ranged against the Gin Kings in a best-of-three series.

Alaska, counting on 89-86 decision of San Miguel last week, won back-to-back games for the first time since late October, or since opening up with three straight wins and briefly holding the lead.

The Aces lost four straight after that and were not able to finish the Sixth they won the last Fiesta Conference with, making this victory a truly confidence-building one in time for the playoffs.

The high-flying Bagatsa and Tony Dr. La Cruz each had eight points and Joe Devance led the way when the Aces outscored Powerade by 3-0 in the third period.

Alaska's defense was also a huge factor in that quarter as it limited the Tigers to 27-percent shooting.

Rookie Sean Anthony led the Tigers with a career-high 29 points. But after veterans Dennis Espino's 10, no other player from Powerade scored in twin digits.

Gary David scored just nine points for Powerade.

Alaska even led by as many as 28, the last at 73-53, in the fourth quarter.

"This game prepares us for whatever we play Friday," said Cone. "We should prepare ourselves. We had a split with Derby Ace and we lost in Cagayan. And it's always important to have momentum in the playoffs."

The scores:

Alaska (86) — Hagler 21, Thoss 14, Ta Santa 12, Devance 10, Bustamante, Dela Cruz 8, Jones 2, Enriquez 3, Custodio 2.

Powerade (79) — Anthony 29, Espino 10, David 9, Mercado 9, Gonzales 7, Lanete 5, Reyes 4, Cortez 2, Reyes 2, Antonio 2, Cadiang 0, Lasco 0, Rilloraza 0, Mendoza 0.

Quarters: 22-16, 38-33, 61-49, 86-79

HAIRLOSS
NEED NOT LEAD TO BALDNESS
Time to act!
ULTIMATE

(NEWS) Espino (left) of Powerade goes for a fresh shot off Servigne Enzo of Alaska in their PBA Philippine Cup encounter last night as the Aniceto Coliseum. The Aces prevailed, 86-78, to boost their confidence for the quarterfinal playoffs. AUGUST SALUDAY

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HK HOOPS

'Blue Birds' soar, crush Thai squad

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE PHILIPPINE team representing by two UAAP squads got their champion down per early and overwhelmed Thailand, 83-63, at the start of the 10th 12-Gold Basketball Hoop Shooting Cup Tuesday night at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium in Hong Kong.

Ateneo's Rich Long and Adamson's Jan Colina pumped in 20 points each as the Philippines coasted to a double-digit advantage, 56-26, by halftime.

Veterans and young guns from three-time UAAP champion blue Eagles comprise majority of the team also mentored by Ateneo Norman Black.

The Blue Eagles earned the right to represent the country as an incentive for ruling the Philippine Collegiate Champion league recently.

But Black also tapped four players from FCL runner-up Adamson Falcons—Colina, Nic Cabanos, Alex Nuyles and Lester Alamo—as several Ateneo players skipped the tournament to focus on their studies.

The "Blue Birds"—a label given to the tots of Eagles and Tamaraws are bidding to do better than its 2008 showing where seventh-seeded country stunned by the Cebu Schools Athletic Foundation Inc. (CesaF) All-Stars settled for a runner-up finish.

The CesaF squad, led by University of Cebu's 6-foot-10 standout Jeremiah Palanda, bowed to host Hong Kong, 100-63, in the finals.

Other teams competing in the tournament are the Southern California Polytechnic Association and China club team CCC Group and Xin Cheng Holdings.

The scores:

PHILIPPINES (83)—Long 20, Colina 20, Nuesta 12, Flores 8, Nds 8, Dela Cruz 6, Antonio 4, Bayan 4, Jones 0, Cabe 0, Cayosa 0, Cadiz 0, Tenguson 0.

THAILAND (63)—Dangchai 14, Jaroenpong 9, Jaroenpan 10, Klinpeth, Nguyen 6, Phanpeth 6, Khlaai 5, Sukhai 2, Sakgan 2, Pangngo 0.

Quarters: 29-11, 56-26, 63-43, 83-63

China offers to train Pinoy bets for SEAG

By Jane Nawaro

CHINA HAS offered a hand to boost the country's bid for the overall crown in the 2011 Southeast Asian Games.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Richie Garcia and Chinese Ambassador Liu Jianchao yesterday signed in twin the bilateral agreement that will allow Filipino athletes to train in China in preparation for the biennial meet to be hosted by Indonesia.

Garcia said the national athletes would be sent to the best training centers in China under the supervision of Olympic medal-winning coaches once the agreement, which expired after the term of former PSC chair Harry Angping, has been fully restored.

"We have agreed in writing and signed the agreement," said Garcia.

Liu, who is also the Chinese ambassador to the Philippines, said the training of athletes will be done in close coordination with the PSC and the Chinese Embassy.

"Right now, Mike (national sports association) send their athletes to train independently," said Garcia. "If there's an agreement, the Chinese government will help us find the best coaches and prepare the training centers where our athletes should stay."

Garcia has picked diving, gymnastics, shooting, boxing and wushu as the most likely beneficiaries of the bilateral agreement.

Asian Games gold medalists Hidilyn Diaz (boxing) and Rosbey Ramos (bowling), silver medalists Warren Kiamco (billiards) and Eugene Torre (chess), taekwondo bronze medalist/veterans John Paul Lizardo and Glendie Rubio Mata, and boxing coach Roel Velasco also attended the gathering.

Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Lluisma
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DOE: One last test needed to determine pipe safety

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF Energy (DOE) plans to invite a representative from the Supreme Court to observe the tests being conducted on the pipeline owned by First Philippine Industrial Corp. (FPIC) in order to speed up its reopening.

According to Energy Secretary Jose Rene D. Almendras, they needed to do one more test following the completion of drilling operations to ensure that there were no other leaks in the 117 kilometer Batangas pipeline.

"They are going to divide the pipe into segments and they're going to put pressure

DOE A 18

DID YOU KNOW

Carlos P. Romulo, the first Asian to become president of the United Nations, served as the UN Security Council president four times—in 1950, 1951 and twice in 1957. Rehab Ginsala, Inquirer Research

SAVED
Around 50 cats placed inside several sacks were rescued from four men who were about to sell them to a medical student for P30 each. The cats were saved by alert barangay executives.

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SYNGENTA PAYS TRIBUTE TO FARMERS ON ITS ANNIVERSARY

syngenta Bringing plant potential to life.

On its 10 year anniversary, Syngenta was given the privilege to connect with farmers from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Three farmers share how they have been helped by Syngenta products and technologies for more than a decade.

Wealth in the earth

FARMER ROMULO V. VILLEGAS

FARMER ROMULO V. VILLEGAS, Valenzuela left among his neighbors-farmers in Brgy. San Pedro, Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija.

Romulo started farming with his parents in his native San Ildefonso, Bulacan at 11 years old when he was still in grade 6. They farmed rice for sale and consumption for the family table.

Now 60, he has continuously farmed for the past 38 years. He moved to Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija when he got married, his wife being from that town. Through the years, he was able to grow their farm up to 6ha. from its initial 15 hectares today.

"Labas ng sako ko sa bigas ako naunang ng kinita. Nine to ten ang ginagastos, siguro 50 to 60 sa kinita sa kanin/bigas ng isang ektarya," (The crops I grow have never been beaten by my neighboring farms. I used to do the farming myself, but now I only tend to pick just fresh ideology.)

Soft: Actara and Amara

All that time, he has also relied on the technology provided by Syngenta and its established Agusta companies, Chemtagro and Syntonic, which had merged their agricultural divisions to form Syngenta in 2000.

"Noong hindako ang Soft (a sensitive herbicide for weeds), dami ako inaaraing (many problems). Tatlong beses ako nabahan. 1%. (When Soft came out, that was when I first harvested a dozen crop. Three-and-a- half hectares, 150 sacks)."

He found out in actual field tests that Soft works best in controlling pre-emergent weeds when mixed well with water irrigation, as advised by its dedicated Syngenta field technicians. Eliminating weeds prior to planting of rice allowed soil nutrients to be available entirely to the crop.

His "favorite" agricultural inputs today are Actara to systemic insecticide against chewing and sucking pests and the recent groundbreaking Amara to fungicide with a yield-boosting effect), both also Syngenta products.

"Strong, mataas dito ang bigas, marami pun. ("When we had a bumper cultivation here, three crops were destroyed by early rainfalls, gathering towards the rice fields) behind him. He had tried thankfully all sorts of pest control to no avail. "Noong gumamit ng ang Actara, nawawala ng patong pitaklo! Ay, maganda to kaya ang Actara sa bansa!" (With Actara, from the very start, well, relieved! Actara is really great against rice bugs thrippers!).

As for the most recently developed Amara, Rodolfo was, well, just awed.

"Kumbaktap ang stalion (The rice leaves) sparkle P. Ay grabe sa stalk talk). "Tuloy-ang bunga niya bilang na, ang sabon bilog pa! Tapos ng ang dami ng ng ang bigat (The stalk looks ripened long due maximizing nutrients to ripe fast. Ang dahon ang bunga). Saka maka-101 malapit (The grains are ripe, but the leaves are still for my rainy season), only now will I harvest a hectic crop for two farmers, maybe more than 3000 bavakis.

"Ang gusto nasa gawa ng lang kalidad (Could it just this

Investing in farming

FARMER ROMULO V. LOPEZ

PARE...TUCUBI City's North District, is home to the farms of Gemmore Pilones and family today. Gemmore started farming a single hectare after high school in Compostela. After getting married to Arlene, he moved over to Pavia in Cebu City and grew.

He became one of the Cebu City Outstanding Farmers in 1987. Then, Regional Gawad Saka in 2000. He even became Barangay Captain, just reinstalled lately past, before everyone calls him "Kap" in Pardo now.

Today, he directly farms 3 hectares but finances 200 here, also in Pardo, as a one-fifth participation in income. Both hectares are mango farms, with rice hectares in tow and the rest are small lots for soft soapstone, eggplants and other vegetable crops on a rotation basis. Mango is now his main money-maker.

"Ang labat na naiyonder na mata dahil sa pagsasaka. Ang ampalaya kami, tapos nagsimula ako kumita ng P5,000 to P6,000 kada farming. Ito ang mga nakapagpaka-bili ng mga sasakyan, motorsiklo." (All we have came from farming. We went into heterogeneous and then a saturate some. Then a piggery and poultry, [Cassimoro smiles].

From the start Syngenta was a helping hand. Arsenal, a fungicide that promotes stamps from diseases during rainy months, was his loyalty. In 2004, Cassimoro won a trip to Bangkok from Syngenta, but he insisted in this trip for more Arsenal instead and gave his mangoliters that much more.

Since 1993, Cassimoro and Arsenal have been sure farming continuously. They have sent two kids through college and a third, Kuya Raul now in 3rd year college, has shifted to agriculture. On competing how much he thought he could earn in IT, farming was basically down.

He finally remembers, he further said are tried different methods, the sole trying to make do without sugar inputs to save on costs. "Pumasa siya. Nakuha ang mga inilalaan niya. (He tries. He plants without), Cassimoro smiles as if only to such.

"Depende naman sa pagganti mayo sa mediuma, as above. Tinggalah inakuwarto ka di depende on correct usage of the inputs. In use, you can succeed," he asserts. "Kahit tumaas ang presyo ng mga abono ngayon, di ako nagbigay ng big investment, but it protects your income too)," he adds.

"Nagpapasalamat kami sa Syngenta sa tulungan ang produkto nila na napagagamit, at saka sa pagsasaka namin, sa pagpa-finance namin sa mangga. Sa ang kanilang mga sudlan sa pamamahay nakabahan at sapatos din. (We thank Syngenta for having their products there to support our farming and our financing the mango farms. And their people too, who have been very kind and supportive)," Cassimoro and Serafyn said.

Syngenta is proud to be part of the Countrymen' success in farming in the Visayas.

Armure, Amore

FARMER ALDO APUD

IN THE BEGINNING of 1980, Aldo Lapat was not yet a farmer. After was in college in Oriental City, taking up B.S. Criminology. By mid-year, having difficulties in making ratios. After made some of the most important decisions of his life to date – to decided to get married and with down as a farmer.

Starting with the 0.2 hectare of riceland that his young wife's family owned and tilled in Mabinay, Zamboanga del Sur just outside of Dumaru City, After went into irrigated rice production.

After took it a point to take some road up and started from technology seminars conducted by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the network of technicians that private companies had in the area. Syngenta's Farmer Support Team (FST) program was one of the most enlightening by recommend.

Though he had been using Syngenta products like Kaiser (to insecticide) and Bo Mix, it was not until 2005-2006 that Syngenta took hold of the interest when it introduced Amore. From then on, it was, well, "amore!"

"Amore talaga. Every crop ang ko ang-a-fortune. Ginamit nadin, Every cropping, 3 ans Amore)," he underlined.

"Sa sa yung maibili o, mas bata ang palay. Mabilis ang higpa. Mabuto, maganda talaga (It's the one that's truly good, the palay is clean. The rice is clean. Clean and really robust)," After gushed on.

His farm has now grown to 10 hectares, most of them into rice, with about 2.5 hectares given to corn.

"Maliking ako mag-experiment, eg, bagong binhi, bagong inhandelaya, yun ang ginagamit ko. If this experimenting, new seeds, new technology, I test," After's relationship with Syngenta field a staff is beyond a mere business one. They are friends, buddies, family.

Now, they will be trying Cruiser-treated seeds. They will also be trying out the new Syngenta Bt Corn seeds (less labor, less pests, more farming).

Talking to the plants

Relationships are key to After. His success farming burning hotter corner? He talks to the plants.

"Parang mga anak ko sila. Sinasabihan ko kung ano ang gagawin ko. Iinvestahan lang ba. Pero habang nagkakausap ako at nanonood ko sila, Sinabi-sabihan, nakikita ko lang anong, may-sakit – may kulangan (The plants are like my children. I tell them about my day, story-telling really. But when I watch them, carrot them, I know if there are problems or needs)," he seriously expounds.

Today, After harvests 6-7 tons per hectares of rice, approximately double the national average of 3-4 tons. He is going for 10 tons per hectare. He joins 9bh 50 thousand per season of rice, with two croppings per year on eighteen productive hectares. And that does not count his corn, 2.5 hectares of bit. I can on his upland acres.

Syngenta thank by After's distance, the new Cruiser technology and the reliable Amore will go a long way in helping him meet his goal in his farm in Mindanao.

Doctors' group open to Kho's reinstatement

By Cynthia D. Balana

FOLLOWING the dismissal of the case filed against him by actress Katrina Halili, former cosmetic doctor Hayden Kho Jr. may be reinstated as a member of the Philippine Medical Association (PMA).

He first, he should ask the Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC) to give him back his medical license.

"It's not automatic. His license was revoked by the PRC and he was suspended by the PMA for two years. He has first to petition the PRC to get his license back before he could file a similar petition for membership in the PMA if he wants to," Dr. Oscar Tinio, PMA president, told the Inquirer yesterday.

Tinio made the clarification through PMA media relations officer, Dr. Abbi Aragon, after the Inquirer asked about Kho's status.

The PRC revoked Kho's license to practice medicine on Nov. 20, 2009 after he was found guilty of "immorally dishonorable and unethical conduct" following the uploading of his sex videos with different women, including Halili, on the Internet.

Dishonorable conduct

Earlier, the PMA suspended his membership with the group upon the recommendation of the ethics committee for "dishonorable conduct."

Halili also sued Kho for violating Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act for uploading on the web several videos of them having sex.

According to the actress, the videos were taken without her knowledge and consent.

The case, however, was recently dismissed by Judge Rodolfo Bonifacio of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 159 for lack of evidence.

Tinio, meanwhile, said that he was not sure whether Kho was still interested to becoming a member of the PMA, the umbrella organization of doctors nationwide.

UNDER CLOSE WATCH From a distance, Coast Guard personnel keep a close eye on one of six women divers participating in the female rescue divers course. Part of the course calls for the trainees to groan a mile-long swim.

Like winning the grand lotto

THE ACQUITTAL of Hubert Webb et al. is also my vindication.

With my defense of Webb's innocence, I feel that I won in the grand lotto jackpot.

***

Except for the justices who abstained themselves from the Hacienda Binalonan case appeal, I was expecting a unanimous decision from the Supreme Court justices.

I thought that all the justices of the high tribunal had discernment, intelligence and common sense.

Those four justices who voted against the acquittal of Webb et al. may not have those qualities.

Or, those justices didn't go over the trial in the Paranaque Regional Trial Court thoroughly.

Or those who wrote the decision for them were too lazy to go over the voluminous documents of the proceedings.

***

Senior Marvin Villanueva, one of those who dissented, argued that "alibi cannot prevail over the positive identification of a credible witness."

An alibi is a claim of the accused that he was somewhere else when the crime for which he is implicated was taking place.

An alibi is the weakest defense in court.

"Against positive identification of a credible witness, alibi becomes most unsatisfactory," said Villanueva.

However, if an alibi is backed by witnesses and documents, as in the case of Hubert Webb, then it becomes a strong defense.

Clearly, Webb was in the United States at the time Patrick Ilisa Vizconde and her two children, Carmelita and Jennifer, were being butchered at 37 Ilocos Paraluman, Documents showing that he was there can not lie.

Villanueva disagreed with his colleagues' contention that the principal witness, Jessica Alfaro, an NBI informant, was not credible.

Obviously, the good justices failed to read the testimonies of former Director Epimaco Velasco of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and Senior NBI Agent Artemio Ganagong.

Both Epimaco and Ganagong said Alfaro was a drug addict who made up the story that she was with the accused when they supposedly committed the crime.

Velasco, who was then NBI assistant director, was chief of the NBI team that investigated the massacre, while Ganagong was Alfaro's handler.

On the matter of Hubert Webb being in the US, his passport and airline tickets showed he left months before the massacre.

A photo of Webb on vacation in Florida that had a date on it—May 1991—or a month before the massacre, was presented in court but was rejected by the judge.

A certification issued by the US government showing Webb was in America at the time of the killings was not also honored by the court.

Villarama noted that not one official of the US federal agencies that issued the certifications of Webb's stay in the United States appeared to testify in court.

Villanueva has the same thinking as then Paranaque Judge Amelita Tolentino, who heard the case.

Tolentino said that for the court to believe the certifications from the US State Department, then Secretary Madeleine Albright should personally testify in her court.

Tolentino's—and by the matter, Villarama's—kind of thinking makes our pubic.

METROBRIEFS

C-5 Road hit by landslide

THE northbound lane of C5 (Katipunan Service Road) was temporarily closed to vehicular traffic yesterday morning following a landslide in the area, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). Abbi Velasco MMDA Metrobase said the landslide happened shortly before 9 a.m. and did not affect traffic flow in the area. No one was reported hurt. —Tina D. Santos

Alfredo C. Singh, 76

ALFREDO C. Ilem Singh, 76, former vice president of the Federation of Free Workers, died on Dec. 14. His body lies at Chapel 1, 3rd floor of Pax de Ananda Avenue, Quezon City. The interment schedule will be announced soon.

DOE: One last...

Front page, A1

ture it and check whether there is a leak or not. The recommendation [from the experts] is to invite the Supreme Court or for someone in this activity so that we don't have to go to court and look for those data," Almeda said.

2 to 3 days

The pressure test could be completed within two to three days, he said.

Energy Undersecretary Jay Layug, meanwhile, said the DOE would also send a letter to PPIC for the Lopez-owned company to ask the high tribunal to allow fuel to flow into the pipeline. This was upon the recent resolution of the company's experts in order to help determine whether the pipeline was leak-free.

Earlier, the high court ordered the indefinite suspension of the pipeline's operations until its safety could be ensured.

The pipe was shut down on Dec. 28 after it was determined to be the source of the oil that had been leaking into the basement of the West Tower condominium in Barangay Pangilan, Makati City, since July.

The condominium is located just several meters away from a portion of the pipeline which runs through the city.

The PPIC pipeline transports fuel products from Batangas province to the Petron oil depot in Bataan. With its shortcomings, the DOE therefore have been forced to use tankers, lorries and barges to bring its products to its gas stations in Metro Manila.

Layug earlier said the pipe's prolonged closure was "unsustainable."

Almeda-Lopez stressed that the pipeline was still the safest, fastest and most environment-friendly way to deliver fuel from Batangas to Manila.

The pipe supplies more than 50 percent of the petroleum products for Pandacan which delivers fuel to 450 stations in Metro Manila and about 1,800 gas stations from Region 1 to 6.

PUVs need MMDA, LGU clearance for franchise application

By Tina G. Santos

OPERATORS of public utility vehicles (PUVs) will have to seek a clearance from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and local government units (LGUs) when applying for a franchise at the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB).

The decision was reached at an en Metro Manila Council (MMC), the policy-making body of the MMDA composed of Metro mayors, unanimously approved a resolution asking the LTFRB to enforce the MMDA and the different LGUs to have a say in the review and approval of applications for franchises of public transport companies.

The MMC specifically urged the LTFRB's parent agency, the Department of Transportation and Communications, to tie the MMC oil in the Road Management Capacity (RMC) Group, the LTFRB body that determines if there is a need to issue new franchises in certain areas.

Mayors' participation

"The mayors should be involved in the decision-making process when it comes to giving out franchises to transport operators," said MMDA Chair Francis Tolentino during the MMC meeting at the Muntinlupa City Hall last Tuesday.

"They know the situation on the ground. They know the capacities of local road networks and they would know if there is a need to have more PUVs passing through their jurisdiction," he added.

As early as 2007, the MMDA has been requesting the LTFRB to require PUV operators to secure a clearance from the MMDA and a permit from their LGUs before applying for a franchise to operate.

Tolentino said the MMC had observed that the LTFRB had been issuing new franchises even the route without consulting the LGUs concerned.

"The lack of accurate information from the concerned localities means an almost yearly increase in the number of PUVs plying the major and secondary roads," he said.

Muntinlupa Mayor Aldrin San Pedro, a strong supporter of the proposal, said any application for new or renewal of Certificates of Public Convenience (CPCs) within the National Capital Region should have the endorsement of the MMC.

Streamlined system

With the MMC on board, the LTFRB's system of granting CPCs to PUV operators will be streamlined and further improved, with the primary objective of reducing traffic congestion, San Pedro added.

Tolentino said the proposed system is also needed to ensure that only legitimate PUV operators, especially bus companies, and those with clean records will be given franchises to operate.

Explaining the legal basis for such a move on the part of the MMDA, he cited Republic Act 7924, the MMDA charter, giving the agency the mandate "to manage transport and traffic in Metro Manila, which includes the formulation, coordination, and monitoring of policies, standards, programs and projects to rationalize existing transport operations."

The LGUs, on the other hand, are also empowered by the Local Government Code to regulate the use of streets, avenues, alleys, sidewalks, and other public places, and regulate garages and the operation of conveyances for hire, Tolentino said.

During the MMDA traffic summit last Dec. 2, Tolentino proposed the amendment of Executive Order 202, the LTFRB mandate, requiring PUV operators to seek a clearance from the MMDA and LGUs before applying for a CPC.

27 refugees die as boat sinks off Australia

SYDNEY—A wooden boat packed with around 70 asylum seekers smashed apart on jagged rocks in heavy seas off an Australian island on Wednesday. Singing screaming women and children ran shrieking unbelievers and killing at least 27 people.

Customs-issued rooftops on a cliff above watched in horror as the boat broke apart with a roar, dumping passengers into monstrous waves that pounded them against the rocks.

"It was just horrible. People getting crushed. Bodies, dead children, the whole thing was pretty awful," police resident Senior Prince told The Associated Press.

Officials gave no immediate word on the nationality of the victims. The Customs and Border Protection Service said in a statement on Wednesday that 27 bodies had been recovered from the water. Forty-one survivors were plucked from the seas, and one person made it to shore.

"The rescue is being continued in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions," the customs department said. "The search and rescue situation is ongoing."

Women and children were among the dead. Western Australian state Premier Colin Barnett said in a statement.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service sent doctors to the island to treat 30 injured victims, said Jenny Neale-Scott, the group's spokesperson. Three patients were critically injured; two more with head injuries and one woman with three abdominal trauma, she said.

Acting Prime Minister Wayne Swan said that the vessel was a people smuggler's boat, but it was not clear where the passengers were from.

Christmas Island is a remote Australian territory closer to Indonesia than the Australian mainland and a frequent target of refugee hopefuls, who are housed in a detention center there. Australia is a prime destination for people from poor, often war-ravaged countries such as Afghanistan who want to start a new life.

Photos and videos taken by witnesses at the scene show the wooden boat smashing into the rocks and breaking apart. The teenage girl whose people floating in the water amid the wreckage is unclear if they are alive or dead. The boat was about 5 to 6 years long, with a cabin covered by a sheet of fabric or plastic.

Prince, who lives near to the cliff where the boat crashed, said he was woken early Wednesday by the screams. People were cheers. He walked to the cliff and instead heard cries for help from a boat just offshore.

"The engine had failed," Prince said. "They were making landward and forward very close to the cliffs here, which are jagged limestone cliffs, very razor."

Prince called the police and more than seven dozens of locals marching on the cliff, wondering how they could help despite the storm and crashing waves. He said the boat, carrying about 30 people, turned for an hour before it finally hit the rocks at about 8 a.m. after cliff.

"When the boat hit the cliff there was a shattering crack. All the people on board rushed to the land side, which is the worst thing they could do, but I don't think anybody could swim. I think there were about two fathoms or boat-line thing," Prince said.

Prince, who owns a dive shop, and other neighbors hauled about 30 or 40 life jackets into the water. But many just floated away. Some would be rescuers were injured on the rocks while trying to get the life jackets to those in the water, he said.

Resident Michael Fraser watched in horror as women and children screamed out for help in the churning seas before.

"They had life jackets on them, but the water was just pushing them up ... and throwing them towards the rocks," Fraser said. "It was a pretty horrible situation."

Fraser, an electrician, now around 50 people struggling against the 3-meter waves which he first arrived at the cliff. Then the overcrowds came began to sweep them away. He counted around 10 bodies that appeared to be dead. In the churning whitewater, it was impossible to tell whether they were women or men, he said. AP

RESIDENTS of Christmas Island clamber on the rocky shore where a wooden boat filled with asylum seekers smashed into and sank.

Swedish appeal thwarts release of Assange

A SUPPORTER of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange demonstrates outside the courthouse.

LONDON—WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange remained behind bars on Wednesday despite a decision by a British court to grant him bail over sex crimes claims after Swedish prosecutors appealed the ruling.

The 39-year-old Australian had given a thumbs-up in the packed courtroom in London as the judge granted him conditional bail on Tuesday, one week after being arrested on the request of Swedish authorities.

But two hours later, however, the Swedish prosecutors announced that they would appeal the ruling, meaning the case will now go to Britain's high court and is now leaving must be heard within 48 hours.

Until that time Assange, who denies the allegations, must stay in his cell at Wandsworth prison in London.

"This is really turning into a show trial," Assange's lawyer Mark Stephens said reporters after learning of the Swedish decision.

"They clearly will not spare any expense to keep Mr Assange in jail," Stephens added.

District Judge Howard Riddle had earlier granted bail worth 240,000 pounds (287,000) but ordered that Assange wear an electronic tag, abide by a curfew and live at the country estate of a supporter.

"I am satisfied that the conditions I am going to impose will make it certain as far as the rule of flight is concerned," Riddle said City of Westminster Magistrates'Court.

Celebrity supporters in court included socialite and singer Jemima Khan, while US filmmaker Michael Moore offered to put up bail. Assange's mother Christine had flown in from Australia for the hearing.

The announcement of bail prompted cheers from about 20 supporters who had staged a protest in support of Assange outside the courthouse. But the response became muted as it emerged that he would not yet be freed.

Even if Sweden had not appealed, Stephens said the court had demanded that those standing bail for Assange come up with 200,000 pounds in cash before he could be freed—and this was unlikely to be raised immediately.

Another member of the legal team, high-profile human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson, earlier told the court that the rape and molestation allegations made against his client by two Swedish women should not be taken seriously.

"It was very clear this is not an extremely serious offense. It is arguably not even a rape offense," Robertson said.

He added that Assange was being held in "Victorian" conditions in prison and was being detained in solitary confinement and allowed just one visit per week.

Assange was arrested on Dec. 7 after giving himself up to police acting on an extradition warrant from Sweden.

His legal team has condemned Sweden's claims as politically motivated, noting their timing coincided with WikiLeaks release of thousands of secret US diplomatic cables, which have touched off a global storm.

Swedish prosecutors insist their investigation is based on law.

Wearing a dark suit and a white shirt, Assange spoke in court Tuesday only to confirm his name, date of birth and address in Victoria, Australia.

His next appearance at the court is on Jan. 11, with a full extradition hearing set for Feb. 7 to 8. AFP

SUPPORTERS of Assange erupt into cheers when it was announced that he had been granted bail. They later became quiet when they learned that Swedish prosecutors would appeal the ruling.

Man fires at US school board, then kills self

PANAMA CITY, Florida—A gunman calmly walked to a podium, spray painted a red "X" with a circle around it on a wall and opened fire as school board members, sending people scrambling and diving for cover. A security guard returned fire, shot and wounded the man who then killed himself, police said.

Despite several shots being fired in a small room, no one else was hit.

In the video of the clash that lasted several minutes, the gunman, Clay A. Duke, is shown unsuccessfully confronting the Bay District school board, telling everyone to leave except the two on the five-member board. Duke, who was wearing a dark pullover vest, stands about eight feet (2.4 meters) directly in front of the board with the gun at his side.

Superintendent Bill Husfelt tries to persuade him to drop the gun. Duke suggests that his wife had been fired from the district, but wasn't told Husfelt or the board who she is or her job. Members provide to help her find a new job, but Duke just shakes his head. Husfelt tells Duke he would be responsible for her dismissal, as the board members had decided to allow it to leave.

"I've got a feeling you want the cops to come in and kill you because you said you are going to die today," Husfelt tells Duke. He then tells him that that isn't worth it.

'Please don't'

The life pauses still silently and deliberately raises the gun and levels it at Husfelt, who pleads: "Please don't, please don't." Duke then fires two shots that miss, followed by several others that didn't hit the hall shown or the people still in the room.

Before he started shooting, the only woman board member, Ginger Littleton, stands up behind Duke as he stands next to the panel's long, beige desk and wheels him on the seat with her lunge, between panic inside of an allegiance like-minded.

"I'm my mind, don't you do the last attempt or opportunity to divert him," she said.

Duke, a large, heavyset man, got angry, turned around, and she fell to the floor and board members pleaded with her to stop. Duke pointed the gun at her head and said, "You stupid b—" but he didn't shoot her, she said. She's not sure why.

"He had every opportunity to take me out," she said.

After Duke, an ex-convict, fired and reloaded Husfelt, district security chief and former police officer Mike Jones ran in and exchanged shots with Duke. It appears that the bullet across shot Duke in the leg or side.

Duke shoots self

Duke then finally shot himself, police Sgt. Jeff Becker said. The video shows a downright Jones, with his gun at his side, having wandered by colleagues as he says he had never shot anyone before. Police officers then storm the room and order everyone onto the ground. School officials tell them that Duke is dead and appears dead. His foot can be seen near the board's room.

"It was no accident. You couldn't believe it was going on," Husfelt said. "He said his wife was fired, but we really don't know what he was talking about. I don't think he knew what he was talking about."

Minutes before Duke got up, the room had been filled with students receiving awards, he said.

"It could have been a monumental tragedy," Husfelt said.

Husfelt said in The Associated Press wearing a suit and pajama bottoms, surrounded by his family. With a Christmas tree as backdrop, he said, "God was standing in front of me and I will go to my grave believing that."

"He could tell by the look in his eyes that this wasn't going to end well," Husfelt said.

'V for Vendetta'

As for the V inside a circle that Duke painted, it's the same symbol used in the graphic novel series and movie "V for Vendetta."

After everything stopped with Duke lying dead on the floor, some board members speculated that the bullets weren't real. But police say Duke's gun was real—and the video shows papers flying up on Husfelt's desk. He said two bullet holes were found in the wall behind his seat.

Some prison records show Duke was charged in October 1999 with aggravated stalking, shooting or throwing a missile into a building or vehicle and obstructing justice. He was convicted and sentenced in January 2000 to five years in prison but was released in January 2004. They also show that Duke was a licensed massage therapist before his arrest. AP

VIDEO footage shows Clay Duke pointing his gun at members of the Bay District schoolboard.

WORLDBRIEFS

Facebook voted best place to work for

NEW YORK—Facebook is the best large US company to work for, according to a survey by a career website published on Wednesday. The social network company placed ahead of Southwest Airlines and management consultants firm Sas & Company on the list compiled by Glassdoor, an online site where users publish feedback on employers. Employees assessed most company when there is poor communication in a company, while other most helpful factors were a common "corporate culture," said Robert Hohman, Glassdoor's chief executive. Reuters

Thai leaders increase pay, get public outcry

BANGKOK—Thailand's government has approved pay raises of up to 11 percent next year for officials and lawmakers, who critics say don't deserve salary increases. Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva will make 125,000 baht ($4,000) a month starting in April. His salary was increased 5 percent. Raises for lawmakers of up to 10 percent take effect after a general election due in 2011. A Thai Chief poll coordinator on Wednesday found 66.4 percent of Thais opposed the increases. AP

Online flirting: It's all about lip service

LONDON—"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" Shakespeare asked. Now, women of the world have replied: "No, just tell me I have beautiful lips." A new survey of online flirting by dating website Badoo.com has found that the best internet chat-up line for men to use is: "You have beautiful lips." Reuters

Arizona teacher claims $95-M lottery jackpot

PHOENIX—Ending nearly two weeks of suspense, a 64-year-old substitute teacher and single parent from Arizona claimed a $95.3-million Powerball jackpot. Sheila Keller, a Fort Mohave resident, presented the single-winning ticket to lottery officials in Phoenix on Monday. She opted to take a lump-sum payment of $49.8 million, saying she plans to buy a recreational vehicle and travel the country. Reuters

Fireman admits causing farmer's death with siren

LONDON—A fireman has admitted causing the death of a farmer who was crushed to death by a herd of cows after they were startled by his engine sirens. Aidan Lawton pleaded guilty at Exeter Crown Court to a charge of causing the death of Harold Lee by careless driving, the Press Association reported on Tuesday. Reuters

Gambling nun accused of embezzling $850,000

NEW YORK—A Catholic nun with a reputation for gambling trips to Atlantic City was accused of embezzling more than $850,000 from a college where she oversaw the school's finances, officials said on Friday. Sister Maria Thomton, former vice president of finance at Iona College in New Rochelle, New York, is charged with stealing money from the school to pay off personal credit card bills and expenses, according to the Office of the US Attorney. Reuters

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

US says North Korea has more nuclear sites

WASHINGTON—The Obama administration has concluded that North Korea's new plant to enrich nuclear fuel uses technology that is "significantly more advanced" than what Iran has struggled over two decades to assemble, according to senior administration and intelligence officials.

In carefully worded public comments in recent days, senior American and South Korean officials have also argued that the new plant could not have been constructed so rapidly unless there was a sophisticated network of other, secret sites—and perhaps a fully operating, secret enrichment plant—elsewhere in the country.

Those conclusions strongly suggest that North Korea has evaded layers of economic sanctions and efforts to intercept secret arms shipments, an effort begun in the Bush administration and accelerated after a United Nations Security Council resolution passed last year after the fourth declared nuclear test.

The intelligence estimates also greatly complicate the task for American diplomats—including a recent delegation of state department and White House officials who left for China on Tuesday. The diplomats have been struggling for months to fashion a common plan with Asian allies and China to contain Kim Jong Il's nuclear ambitions.

North Korea already has the fuel for six to 12 nuclear weapons and has conducted two nuclear tests, a capability it showcased by harvesting plutonium from a nuclear reactor that was recently shuttered.

While the North says the new uranium enrichment plant will produce fuel for reactors that could produce electricity for the impoverished country—the same argument Iran has made for its enrichment efforts—the North does not possess such reactors today. But if the plant is used to produce highly enriched uranium, it could give the country another pathway to increasing its nuclear arsenal.

Some American officials said they were most concerned that the real intent of showing off the new capability last month to a Stanford expert, Siegfried S. Hecker, a former director of Los Alamos National Laboratory, and two of his Stanford colleagues, was to advertise North Korea's wares to other countries that might want to buy them. Dr. Hecker said he was "stunned" that North Korea had succeeded in building the plant so quickly.

On Friday Gary Samore, President Obama's chief nuclear adviser, said for the first time that "the North Korean program appears to be much more advanced and efficient than the Iranian program, which is causing us problems."

After alluding to a secret North Korean effort to help Syria build a nuclear reactor, which was recently destroyed by Israel in a 2007 bombing raid, Samore said that the new North Korean revelations could be attractive to other nations.

American, South Korean and Chinese officials have advised edged in recent days that despite their intense focus on the North's efforts to obtain uranium enrichment technology they all missed the intensity of the plant at Yongbyon, North Korea's main nuclear complex.

The area is under intense scrutiny from American satellites, but the new plant was built inside an old structure—and satellites cannot see through the roof. Intelligence officials have said in the past that they have few spies in North Korea with access to the most sensitive facilities.

When it comes to North Korea, the United States has frequently had to rely on breakthroughs by allied intelligence services. South Korea first notified Washington, a decade ago, that North Korea was buying components for missiles smuggled in Ukraine. The head of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, came to Washington in 2007 and dropped photographs of the North Korean-built nuclear reactor in Syria on the coffee table of Stephen J. Hadley, President George W. Bush's national security adviser.

American officials caution that it is not clear the North Koreans will get the new enrichment plant running. Hecker was given a quick walk-through of parts of the plant, and could not confirm whether the centrifuges were operating. But what he saw was enough to convince him, and American intelligence experts, that the facility could not have been built that quickly unless a network of centrifuge construction facilities and uranium processing plants existed elsewhere.

"It is likely that North Korea had been pursuing an enrichment capability long before the April 2009 date it now claims," Glyn Davies, the American ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency said last week. It is, he said, likely that a clear likelihood that North Korea "has built other uranium enrichment related facilities in its territory." New York Times News Service

MISGIVINGS A colorful protective gear wears a "civilian victim" during Wednesday's civil defense drill. AP

South Korea stages mass evacuation drill

SEOUL—South Koreans stopped their cars, donned gas masks and ducked into underground shelters on Wednesday in the country's biggest-ever evacuation drill, a government attempt to prepare traditionally indifferent citizens for possible new attacks by North Korea.

Fears of war on the divided Korean peninsula have increased since the South fired artillery shells at each other last month in the first exchange of fire between the two countries since the end of the Korean War. Four South Koreans were killed, the South's casualties are unknown.

The nationwide 20-minute evacuation drill on Wednesday were the largest since the country began the training in 1975.

In frigid temperatures, air-raid sirens blared. Government officials and company employees stopped work and evacuated to underground shelters in basements, subway stations and parking lots. Housewives were asked to turn off the gas to their kitchens.

As almost South's Korean flights flew over major cities to simulate North Korean air strikes. Bullet trains ran at low speeds to a symbolic move to join with other stopped vehicles.

In downtown Seoul, about 30 kilometers from the heavily militarized border and within easy range of North Korean artillery, the city's congested streets unexpectedly cleared as traffic halted.

There was no penalty for not going to shelters, but authorities encouraged participation, sending out mass text messages and broadcasting notices in residential areas. Officials expected up to 12 million of South Korea's 49 million people to take part in the drill. AP

LEE Kuan Yew

Stupid, Lee called rulers of Burma

SINGAPORE—A classified U.S. document released by WikiLeaks cites Singapore statesman Lee Kuan Yew as calling the military rulers of Burma (Myanmar) "stupid" and "demon."

A confidential briefing on a 2007 conversation between Prime Minister Lee and US officials was released by WikiLeaks this week.

It quoted Lee as saying that dealing with Burma's military regime was like "talking to dead people."

US Ambassador Patricia L. Herbold wrote that Lee said China had the most influence over Burma's bookends of any foreign country. Lee also said China was worried the country could "blow up," which would threaten Chinese investments.

The 87-year-old Lee was prime minister from 1959 to 1990 and is a senior adviser to his son, current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. AP

Berlusconi wins 2 confidence votes, sparks riots

ROME—Premier Silvio Berlusconi pulled off another unsinkable comeback from the political dead, scraping through two confidence votes on Tuesday in a dramatic parliamentary showdown.

But the Italian leader's hold on power remains precarious as his razor-thin victory makes political gridlock a near certainty—and violent street protests drew growing unease with his rule.

Masked protesters torched cars and trash bins, smashed shop windows and clashed with police. Clouds of white tear gas and orange flares engulfed streets, as shops full of Christmas goods hurriedly closed down. Employees at one bank cowered in fear as a group of stone-throwing youths swept by.

Protesters rampaged in the the area around parliament and theheavenly monument, which had been constructed by Saxony palace pessence. By nightfall, almost 100 people, both protesters and police, were reported injured, including about two dozen hospitalized. About 40 were reportedly taken into police custody.

The chaos fueled speculation in recent weeks that the end of the Berlusconi era was near.

Weakened by sex scandals and a bitter breakup with his one-time closest ally, Berlusconi seemed destined to be sent packing. The split with Gianfranco Fini had eroded the premier's once comfortable parliamentary majority and left him vulnerable in the lower house.

But Berlusconi battled back, as he has countless times when his political career seemed to be on the ropes. Tuesday's drama confirmed his status as the ultimate political survivor—but he emerges from the battle severely weakened and one top opposition lawmaker called his victory a "Pyrrhic victory."

In the most dramatic and closest of the two votes, Berlusconi narrowly defeated a motion to the lower house by just three votes. Scuffles between lawmakers forced a brief suspension in the voting session.

Earlier in the day, Berlusconi had secured a more comfortable victory in a confidence vote in the Senate.

The vote's nine-margin means Berlusconi can no longer count on a secure parliamentary majority for governing decisions. Some experts predict he might resign to opposing attacks, a move that could lead to early elections, which for hopes to win again.

Berlusconi survived Tuesday's challenge by exploiting rifts inside Fini's group—at the moment of truth, three defected—and managed to sway a handful of undecided lawmakers in his side. In the process, he drew accusations of vote-buying, amid claims of cash changing hands and future lucrative. Berlusconi's allies reject the allegations.

"I'm not a survivor—I'm strong, robust," a smiling Berlusconi joked after the vote.

Pressing his case before lawmakers on the eve of the showdown, the premier argued that his government had successfully worked to protect Italy from becoming engulfed in the eurozone's debt crisis. He warned that political instability would hurt Italy as it fights for its economic life.

Berlusconi's survival handed a big setback to opposition forces who had hoped to capitalize on the political turmoil to force early elections, which they predicted he might lose to opposing attacks, a move that could lead to early elections, which for hopes to win again.

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A RIOT policeman fires tear gas as demonstrators in Rome on Tuesday.

Greek unions hold general strike against reforms

ATHENS—A new general strike hit Greece on Wednesday, grounding flights and disrupting hospital and transport services as angry unions protested feebly approved labor reforms amid painful economy-saving measures.

Security was tight in central Athens, where rare separate demonstrations had been planned. Previous protests have been marred by violence, and in May three people died in a bank torched by rioting demonstrators.

Wednesday's general strike is the seventh organized this year by unions appalled at a wave of austerity measures meant to pull Greece out of its worst financial crisis since World War II.

All air, rail and ferry services had been canceled, while traffic in Athens would be severely disrupted as public transport workers and taxi drivers planned to walk off the job for hours.

Journalists were also holding a 24-hour strike, causing TV, radio and Internet news blackouts, and newspapers would not be published on Thursday.

Crippled by high budget deficits and a mountain of debt, Greece was saved from bankruptcy in May by a $110 billion international rescue loan package, in return for drastic cutbacks in pensions and salaries, hiked taxes, raised minimum ages and eased restrictions on private sector layoffs.

Late Tuesday, the government won a key vote in parliament on a fresh labor reform package that includes freezing vast, salary caps and controversial staff transfers at state companies. The new laws also reduce unions' collective bargaining powers in the private sector, where employers will be able to substantially reduce salaries.

All opposition parties opposed the reforms, which left-wing parties claim will take labor relations "back in the Middle Ages."

But Prime Minister George Papandreou's frustration over the need to run around loss-making public corporations while setting private sector jobs by allowing smuggling businesses to see more.

Unions argue that the cutbacks are unfair and recession-driven.

"These policies shift the burden of the crisis onto the backs of low-salary earners and pensioners, deepen the economic and increase unemployment," the GSEE umbrella private sector union said in a statement ahead of Wednesday's strike. AP

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

OFW remittances surge to $15.46B

Highest monthly record posted in October

By Michelle V. Rarra

REMITTANCES SENT to the Philippines reached $1.67 billion in October, the highest monthly level so far recorded, given robust demand by foreign companies for Filipino skilled and professional workers.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday that the latest amount of remittances from Filipinos abroad was higher by 9.3 percent from $1.53 billion in October last year.

Remittances in October brought the total for the first 10 months to $15.46 billion, up 7.0 percent from $14.32 billion in the same period last year.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the turns of Filipino banks to expand their remittance channels worldwide also helped increase inflows as reading money became easier.

The central bank chief said remittances in October came mainly from the United States, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Italy, Germany and Norway.

Tetangco cited a report by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) showing a robust demand for Filipino workers by companies offshore. Job orders for Filipino workers reached 976,331 from January to October this year. These orders involved professional and technical jobs.

The central bank chief said remittances were expected to remain strong over the short to medium term given the expanding labor markets for Filipinos. He said this although some countries, especially industrialized Western nations, were having difficulty accelerating their recovery from the latest global crisis, growth of alternative labor markets was seen to boost demand for Filipino workers.

Tetangco said ongoing talks between the Department of Labor and Employment with its counterparts in foreign countries would also help ensure strong inflows of remittances.

"Looking ahead, the deployment outlook for Filipinos overseas remains upbeat given the continuing bilateral talks with more host countries, aimed at matching manpower requirements with the competencies of Filipino workers," Tetangco said.

He cited Algeria and Guam as countries that have expressed interest to hire more Filipino workers in 2011. Algeria is planning to implement an infrastructure project while Guam is about to kick for the construction of a military base.

Remittances, which fuel consumption of Filipino households, have been credited for helping the Philippine economy escape a recession last year and post a robust growth this year.

In 2009, when remittances reached $17.3 billion, the economy grew 1.1 percent. This was a slowdown from the previous year's 3.8 percent, but was better compared with the growth performance of most developed countries, which fell into recession.

The Philippines is the world's fourth-biggest recipient of remittances after China, India and Mexico.

Indicators

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Dec. 15, 2010
43.940

STOCK MARKET
Dec. 15, 2010
58.28

Stocks down on profit-taking

LOSS-TAKING accumbed to renewed profit-taking yesterday, ignoring the fairly upbeat global markets among them China's decision not to raise interest rates.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index lost 58.28 points or 1.4 percent to finish at 4,089.76.

The decline was led by the financial and property counters, which fell 3.14 percent and 2.66 percent, respectively. The industrial and mining-oil counters tacked on the downtrend.

The overall losers was weighed down most by Metrobank, the most actively traded stock. It accounted for about 8 points of the decline when it closed 0.8 percent lower at P44.00. Traders said Tuesday was the "ex-date" for Metrobank's stock rights offer and was thus the last day on which those who did not want to buy additional shares — to trim their holdings and get the equivalent

STORIES B2

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Pepsi to boost juice line /B2
■ BIR collection rose to P82.4B in Nov. /B3
■ PH economy seen growing 6.5-7% in 2011 /B6

Number of jobless Filipinos rose to 2.8M in October

By Reneal W. Dennigo

THE 2.8 million of jobless Filipinos increased to 2.8 million in October from 2.7 million in July, the National Statistics Office said yesterday.

Based on the NSO's latest Labor Force Survey, the unemployment rate inched up to 7.3 percent in October from 6.9 percent three months earlier.

Also yesterday, Economic Planning Secretary Cayetano W. Paderanga Jr. reserved calls for the government to speed up implementation of policies and programs that would create more decent and quality jobs in the coming years.

"With the continued improvement in the level of confidence for the Philippines amid a still fragile and vulnerable world economy, the government should take advantage of this opportunity to implement the necessary reforms," Paderanga said.

Paderanga, who is also director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, said the continuing problem in unemployment, particularly the lack of jobs available for the educated workforce, should be addressed.

He said such efforts should include fast-tracking the needed structural changes, particularly in encouraging more investments and entrepreneurship, improving competitiveness and productivity, adopting the appropriate and effective agribusiness policy, and providing support for micro, small and medium enterprises.

In October, the number of Filipinos 15 years and older and who could work reached an estimated 61.7 million.

Of these people, there were 39.1 million participating in the labor force, but only 36.3 million were holding full-time or part-time jobs.

NSO documents showed that more than

NUMBER B2

The Insular Life Assurance Company, Ltd.
NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS

Please be informed that nominations may now be submitted for candidates for the post of three (3) members of the Board of Trustees to replace those whose terms of office are expiring on the date of the 2011 Annual Regular Members' Meeting scheduled on Wednesday, May 25, 2011, at 4:15 P.M.

The nomination should be in accordance with the requirements of Article 4 of the Company's amended By-Laws and the Code of Corporate Governance Principles and Practices issued by the Insurance Commission under Circular No. 10-2002 dated September 20, 2002. A copy of both documents may be obtained from the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

The nomination must be in writing and should set forth the name of the nominee and their written acceptance of the nomination. The said nomination must be received by the Office of the Corporate Secretary on or before Wednesday, January 26, 2011.

(Sgd.)
Atty. RENATO B. DE JESUS
Corporate Secretary

SMART MONEY introduces another innovative mobile-to-mobile cash transfer.
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Para mag-PASA PERA mula sa SMART Money Pilipinas at ang SMART Money at ang Transfer:
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Mabilis • Maasahan • Maraming mapagpipilian
Send to over 43 million SMART and Talk 'N Text mobile numbers anywhere.
SMART

Pepsi to boost juice line

Non-soda drinks soon to make up half of total output

By Doris C. Dumlao

BEVERAGE MAKER Pepsi-Cola Products Philippines Inc. plans to scale up its non-carbonated beverage business, increasing production in two to three years until its products make up half of the company's total output, thereby cutting down on costly sugar input.

Pepsi's non-carbonated beverages, which include sports drink Gatorade and fruit juice Tropicana, are up 50 to 60 percent less sugar than the sodas, PCPPI president and chief executive officer Pardha Chakrabarti told reporters after the company's special stockholders meeting yesterday.

The company's non-carbonated line has grown by double-digit levels in recent years and now accounts for 20 percent of its business.

"We're hoping that in the next two to three years, it will grow to 50 percent," Pardho said, saying this would be one way of mitigating the impact of commodity price cycles.

When PCPPI debuted on the Philippine Stock Exchange in early 2008, sugar accounted for about 26 percent of input costs. This has now increased significantly due to the rise in sugar prices.

Pardho said cost pressures coming from the global upswing in commodity prices would not likely be a permanent thing as industries and market across the globe would adjust. But on this front, PCPPI, he did not rule out the possibility of PCPPI investing in its own sugar plantation to reduce input costs.

In the past fiscal year ending June, the combined increase in sugar prices tempered profits arising from an increase in net sales.

Even when the government eased up on the importation of sugar to curb the sharp price increase, Pardho said the allowance was still too small and it was necessary to buy from local producers at a high price.

PCPPI, now under the control of South Korea's Lotte Group, has amended its charter to enable it to run a confectionery business in the Philippines. According to Pardho, the local company has no immediate plans of bringing in any of Lotte's products, but it may be considered possible to prepare for that eventuality.

"Lotte has many products which don't conflict with PepsiCola's. So if there's opportunity, if we want to enter into those categories, we're not barred from that. If it's something like coffee, mineral water or products like that, there's no conflict at all. The (manufacturing) technology is similar," he explained.

Pardho said the carbonated line, meanwhile, grew in a faster pace than expected this year.

He also said PCPPI would invest around ₱30 million this fiscal year—about a quarter higher than that of last year—to beef up its production line in Cagayan de Oro.

Kronos Beverage Bottle Latin China Beverage Co. Ltd. acquired a 39.4-percent stake in PCPPI for about ₱4 billion last October.

PCPPI stock yesterday closed at ₱0.58 per share, down by about 0.8 percent.

Globe, Bayan connect networks

By Paolo G. Montecillo

THE NETWORKS of rivals-led Globe Telecom and Lopez-owned Bayan Telecommunications are now 100-percent interconnected, allowing subscribers of both firms to call each other without having to pay long-distance rates.

"We are happy to have achieved full interconnection with another telecommunications company for the good of customers and businesses in these provinces," Globe head for external affairs Gil Genio told reporters in Samar said. "This is a positive sign that even industry competitors can work together to serve public interest, and spur the domestic economy with relevant and cost-effective telecommunications services."

Without such interconnection deals, subscribers from different networks would have to pay long-distance rates even when placing calls to people just across the street.

Number . . . From page B1

half or 51.7 percent of those with jobs were working in the services sector, slightly higher than 51.2 percent in July.

"The largest employed workforce in the services sector—representing 7.2 million or 19.6 percent of total employed—went to wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods," NSO Administrator Carmelita N. Ericta said in a statement.

Jobs related to agriculture accounted for 33.6 percent of those employed, up from 32.9 percent in the previous survey.

Workers in industry represented 14.7 percent of jobs in October, down from 15.9 percent in July.

Among the various occupation groups, the laborers and unskilled workers comprised the largest group at 32.4 percent of the total employed population, Ericta said.

"Farmers, forestry workers and fishermen were the second largest group, accounting for 16.2 percent of the total employed," she added.

Stocks . . . From page B1

number of shares offering in order to earn from the spread. If the common stock is bought on or after the ex-rights date, the investor does not receive rights attached to the stock offering.

One dealer said fund managers were more light-investing on these position to keep their full-year gains intact and preparing to realign their portfolio for next year.

There were more than two decliners for every single gainer although value turnover was relatively thin at ₱4.1 billion. Boris C. Dumlao

Law and behold

BREAKTIME

Conrado E. Bernal III

THREE DECADES is a lot in this country governing pipelines, whether they are for fuel, natural gas or, pure, just plain water.

For several decades now we have been using fuel pipelines. Cooking gas was once transported in parts of Manila through pipelines. Also, the 120-kilometer long pipeline of First Philippine Industrial Corp. (FPIC), which recently turned into a media freak show because of a leak, is already more than 40 years old.

Of course, you have to add to that long line some 700 kilometers of new pipeline, mostly for transporting natural gas from the Malampaya field (Palawan), plus the endless water pipes through out the country.

You would think that our hard-working legislators should have come up with some bills on this important economic tool by this time. It seems none of them ever saw the need for rules over the pipeline business.

In the aftermath of the FPIC pipeline leak, the predicament of 80 families in two media days took the brunt of the oil leak, basically caught the blistering imagination of everybody in media and the government.

I just thought the accident should have taught us, and the legislators too, some lessons.

* * *

In the United States, where they started using oil pipelines more than a hundred years ago, legislators overhauled the pipeline safety laws some four years ago. There is now the so-called Pipeline Act, which stands for Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement and Safety Act, passed by the US Congress in 2006. It is loaded with provisions against accidents (i.e., leak) and—most important, terror attacks.

In reading the bill, from what I gathered, the US Congress tapped international scientific organizations, not to mention the wide experience of regulation agencies all over the world.

That should give our legislators a wealth of information. I mean, crafting a law here should not be that difficult. It should also probably specify options for dredging and recheking the conditions of pipelines every now and then.

In this modern world, with millions of miles of pipelines, leaks are fairly common occurrence. Thieves in some places actually puncture pipelines to obtain the fuel. In some instances, the pipelines exploded, killing hundreds of people.

Here is a little tip. The new US law covered those things extensively.

Still, some lessons could be learned from the FPIC pipeline incident. Top scientists and engineers from the University of the Philippines, not to mention US-based engineering firm CH2M Hill, must have some stories to tell or points to share with our lawmakers.

It was the UP team, led by Lito Arevilla of the National Institute of Geological Sciences, which detected early on that the FPIC pipeline was leaking. Its findings were confirmed once and for all that there was a leak. PNE itself found the exact location, which was about 10 meters from where the Antilla team dug test holes. The US firm CH2M Hill is now cleaning up the affected area contracted at almost a hundred.

The US company was fast, I tell you. Within a week, it determined the areas of contamination. And as it immediately started with its recovery of spilled fuel.

If you check out CH2M Hill, you will find that it has cleaned up all sorts of spills—including those from nuclear power plants. The point is that the technology is already available. Our lawmakers should have a clear head start.

Moreover, the law will be good for business. One possible result of legislation will be opportunities for hard engineering outfits. Somebody must provide technologies to the operators of all those pipelines. So a few!

* * *

GLOBAL Business Power Corp. (GBPC), the lead group in the power generation ventures of Dr. Hermilando group, has a new president: Arthur Aguilos.

Yes, he is the same executive who oversaw the privatization of the power assets of the government-owned Napocor.

He also headed the government firm NDC under the Gma administration of Zenaida Ong.

Aguilar is now GBPC acting president, replacing Jesse Alonzo, who is former head of the power-regulating body ERC.

From what I heard, Alcorda remains in GBPC as vice chair, alongside Alfred Ty, the son of Metrobank founder George Ty.

Also, GBPC board corporate secretary is Augusto Ty Jr., Ong Isa's daughter-in-law.

Keeping an the company's 2015 board are Francisco C. Sebastian (also president of the group's investment banking arm UNICAP), Antonio L. Alcorda (Metro Bank chair), Arthur Ty, Ty (Metro Bank president), Mary Ty, Roderico E. Puno and Joshua F. Nang.

GBPC is investing more than ₱5 billion in brand-new power plants in Cebu and Panay Island, which are suffering from power shortages.

Between us gals, word goes around that GBPC is also planning a power generation venture in Luzon, its everybody knows, except perhaps the Department of Energy. Luzon is on the verge of power outages, too. There is hardly any sensitive power in the Luzon grid.

This means GBPC board and management have a lot of homework. It normally takes at least five years to plan and construct a power plant.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

As of December 15, 2010

Company	Symbol	Open	High	Low	Close	Volume
Alcorp	ALCO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Alsons Consolidated Resources	ALCR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Atlas Consolidated Mining & Development	ATLA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Basic Energy Corporation	BASC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Benguet Corporation 'A'	BENA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Benguet Corporation 'B'	BENB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Cebu Air, Inc.	CEB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Cebu Holdings, Inc.	CEBH	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Cebu Pacific Holdings, Inc.	CEBP	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Azucarera Don Pedro, Inc.	CAD	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc.	CCHI	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'A'	CCHIA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'B'	CCHIB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'C'	CCHIC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'D'	CCHID	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'E'	CCHIE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'F'	CCHIF	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'G'	CCHIG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'H'	CCHIH	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'I'	CCHII	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'J'	CCHIJ	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'K'	CCHIK	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'L'	CCHIL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'M'	CCHIM	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'N'	CCHIN	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'O'	CCHIO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'P'	CCHIP	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'Q'	CCHIQ	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'R'	CCHIR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'S'	CCHIS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'T'	CCHIT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'U'	CCHIU	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'V'	CCHIV	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'W'	CCHIW	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'X'	CCHIX	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'Y'	CCHIY	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Central Cebu Holdings, Inc. 'Z'	CCHIZ	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0

Currencies

Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Euro Equivalent
United States	dollar	43.70	1.0000	43.695
Japan	yen	0.5405	0.0124	0.5404
United Kingdom	pound	1.1048	1.7648	48.3911
Hong Kong	dollar	5.6196	0.1286	5.6187
Switzerland	franc	1.1949	0.0273	48.7151
Canada	dollar	43.9264	1.0050	43.9248
Singapore	dollar	33.6175	0.7693	33.6148
Australia	dollar	43.9805	1.0063	43.9787
Denmark	krone	7.8611	0.1799	7.8608
South Korea	won	0.0387	0.0009	0.0387
Netherlands	euro	58.7767	1.3450	58.7742
Kuwait	dinar	157.7317	3.6090	157.7249
Luxembourg	euro	58.7767	1.3450	58.7742
Sweden	krona	6.2183	0.1423	6.2180
Taiwan	dollar	1.4393	0.0329	1.4392
Saudi Arabia	riyal	11.6544	0.2667	11.6539
Malaysia	ringgit	14.1181	0.3231	14.1175
Norway	krone	7.4599	0.1707	7.4596
Thailand	baht	1.4393	0.0329	1.4392
Qatar	riyal	12.0055	0.2747	12.0050
Bahrain	dinar	116.0000	2.6545	115.9949
Oman	rial	113.5065	2.5975	113.5015
Libya	dinar	34.8000	0.7963	34.7985
Iceland	krona	0.3783	0.0087	0.3783
Jordan	dinar	61.6901	1.4113	61.6874
Egypt	pound	7.6000	0.1739	7.5997
Lebanon	pound	0.0290	0.0007	0.0290
Mexico	peso	3.4000	0.0778	3.3998
Philippines	peso	1.0000	0.0229	1.0000
Russia	ruble	1.4000	0.0320	1.3999
Saudi Arabia	riyal	11.6544	0.2667	11.6539
Sweden	krona	6.2183	0.1423	6.2180
Switzerland	franc	43.9264	1.0050	43.9248
Taiwan	dollar	1.4393	0.0329	1.4392
Thailand	baht	1.4393	0.0329	1.4392
Vietnam	dong	0.0024	0.0001	0.0024

Source: Bankers Association of the Philippines

* Peso-Dollar Reference Rate ** Peso-Euro Reference Rate *** Peso-Yen Reference Rate

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BIR collection rose to P82.4B in November

OECD upbeat on Philippine business

By Michelle V. Ibarra

THE PHILIPPINES got the highest score among selected emerging Asian economies in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development's latest business growth projections.

According to the latest Asian Business Cycle Quarterly (ABCQ) of the OECD, an international organization pushing for politics and economics that promote economic and social development, indicators point to expansion of businesses in the Philippines in the very short term, that is in the next quarter.

"It seems recovery is ongoing in the Philippines driven by strong exports and improving business sentiment," the OECD said in the paper.

The forecast is consistent with projections by the Philippine government that the economy would sustain growth of 7.0% in 2011.

Results of the OECD study showed the Philippines getting the highest score in terms of leading composite indicators among selected emerging Asian countries. The leading composite indicator for the Philippines stood at 103.2 points for the fourth quarter of 2010. Indonesia's was 100.8; Malaysia, 99.1; Singapore, 100.7; Thailand, 100; China 101.9 and India 100.4.

Leading composite indicators—which include consumer demand, commodity prices, corporate profits, capital investments, stock prices, and business expectations surveys—show the potential state of an economy and its business cycles.

The OECD said a general expectation of expanding businesses was fit for the Philippines.

The outlook for developing countries in Asia is generally rosy, taking into account their performance so far this year. Unlike in, disinflicted countries in the West, emerging Asian economies have posted robust growth rates this year, thus leading the world's recovery from the global economic turmoil that peaked in 2009.

In the case of the Philippines, it grew by 7.6 percent in the first three quarters of 2010. Economic officials credited this to improved export income, rising remittances from Filipino household consumption, and increase in investments.

The optimistic outlook on emerging Asian markets is the reason for the surge in foreign capital inflows to Asia.

By Russiel W. Domingo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue collected P82.42 billion in November but this fell short of the target of P88.822 billion for the period, Revenue Commissioner Kim S. Henares said yesterday.

However said this was the fifth second-highest monthly yield this year after the P95.16 billion collected last April.

This put the total collection for the 11 months to November at P713.12 billion or 10.5 percent higher year on year.

Even then, Henares said meeting the full-year target of P880 billion "may not be feasible."

"The monthly trend, or how much the BIR collects per month, is dictated mostly by tax deadlines and the amount of taxable business activity," she said.

Compared to the collections in the same month of 2009, last month's revenue grew by almost 16 percent or P12.07 billion.

"This is the ninth time this year that the BIR registered double-digit growth in its monthly collection, and the fourth time in five months or since July 2010," Henares said.

She added that the year-on-year growth rate for November was the highest monthly growth achieved in 32 months or almost three years.

Henares said that while the BIR might not be able to collect P880 billion this year, as targeted, she expressed hope that this agency's original goal of P800 billion might be achieved.

"The P800 billion requires a reasonable growth of 10.3 percent over 2009 collections, and BIR collections from January to November have already expanded by 10.5 percent," she said.

"The holiday season and all the business activity that it brings may just be what the BIR needs to reach its target by December," she added.

The government, which expects to spend P325 billion over its budget, is relying heavily on the BIR—its biggest revenue-earner.

Tax take fell short of target for the month

Investors seen infusing ₱11B into Spug power facilities

By Alry R. Ibarra

SOUTH JOB NATIONAL Power Corp. expects investments in power to reach as much as P11 billion into energy projects and other critical energy infrastructure in Jo Bong, off-grid areas over the next three years.

At the sidelines of the 6th Energy Investment Forum yesterday, Napocor president Pedro A. Tarquinio said investors were now infusing equity into power projects while the state power firm would provide the expertise, marketing and other services.

According to Tarquinio, Napocor had already signed seven agreements with both local and foreign companies for the conduct of feasibility studies for such projects in rural areas under its small power utilities group (Spug).

Spug is Napocor's missionary electrification arm, providing electricity to remote islands and Jo Bong, inland barangays that are not connected to any of the main grids. Funding for these projects is shouldered by all power consumers through the universal charge for missionary electrification and other government subsidies.

Napocor and prospective investors are initially eyeing hydropower projects in Oriental Mindoro; natural gas projects in Occidental Mindoro; and biomass facilities in Lubang, Tiwi, Bonbon, Balogan and Sorsogon.

Tarquinio said Napocor was currently in talks with two firms—US-registered Greenpro Corp. and Belgian firm Electrawinds—for possible partnerships for biomass and solar power projects in Spug areas.

He said Napocor was hoping to sign the new agreements within the first quarter of next year.

"With these agreements, we are moving a step forward. We will formulate business plans for these proposed power projects which we will submit to the Department of Energy. Depending on the result of the negotiations, these agreements may either be for supply offtake or joint venture arrangements," he said.

Manila's port area eyed as financial center

A 219-HECTARE government property in the Manila Port area, is being eyed by the city government for development into Manila's financial center, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim told members of newly formed Manila-based business group The Manila Mandate.

Lim said a financial district similar to that of Makati would help Manila regain its position as the country's business hub.

He said the location of the proposed financial center was deemed strategic as it was considered by Manila Bay to the west and, to the east, the 36th century Spanish era Walls of Intramuros. Within the long stretch of the Walls is an 18-hole golf course.

The area current the main office of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) along Bonifacio Drive and is presently dotted with warehouses, near Manila Bay leased by private companies from the Phil. Ports Authority.

Lim, who delivered his speech at the historic Manila Grand Opera House along Rizal Avenue Manila, said the place could be more productive if financial houses were encouraged with proper incentives to put up branches or maybe relocate there.

The Mayor assured investors that taxes in Manila were not onerous, as it was in fact, one of the lowest in Metro Manila.

He also said he had tried but failed to convince private land owners along Pasaje St. to consider the architectural concept drawn up by the UST School of Architecture for Escolta which he said, was the 5th Avenue of Manila for about three decades.

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEPS)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National, Citizenship	Position
SORRENTO INTERNATIONAL, INC. Rm. 402 Sorrento Bldg., Arnaiz cor. Villamoran St., Bonifacio, Manila	Sahjee Abdelkader Mohammad Sudanese	Marketing Director
PHIL-CIS LTD. INC. 11/F ECTD Building, Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong	Yoichi Asano Japanese	Senior Manager
TALISAY PHILIPPINE CONSTRUCTION, INC. 12/F Equitable Bank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Shigenori Inoue Japanese	HSE Manager
SONGYONG MINING AND REFINING CORPORATION Unit 22, 2/F Legaspi Towers 300, Roxas Blvd. cor. Vito Cruz, Manila	Zhizhong Cheng Chinese	Assistant Manager for Production
HECHELS-EZEX (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD. 12/F Tower 2, Lahug Center, 2 Corporate Center, Lahug, Cebu, Philippine Companies Corp. Bldg., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Nathapon Sukwimol Thai	Product Marketing Manager
SAN MAR TRADING 2-32 Sct St., QC, Philippines	Xiaojun Chang Lucio Jr. (LJC) Filipino	Purchasing Manager
ALL SAFAR SEAMEN'S UNION PHILS & SEAFARD SERVICE (PHIL.) CORP. 6/F Mariveles Bldg., Pl. G. Velasquez St., Tondo, Manila	Gregorio Fabonan Japanese	Branch Manager
GERBILS TRADING AND CONTRACTING COMPANY, INC. Unit 1001 Burlington Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Scott Errol Anderson Canadian	Consultant for Project Management
FOLLETT/SOLA ASIA, INC. Manager 2/F, Pearl Commercial Arcade, Pasay City	Lacey Anthony McNeil American	Consultant
FOLLETT/SOLA ASIA, INC. Manager 2/F, Pearl Commercial Arcade, Pasay City	Vivienne Marie McNeil American	Consultant
SCHNEIDER PHILIPPINES, INC. 44/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave. cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City	Marcus Bodewell German	Director for Logistics
GLOBALSYS INC. 2/F Cyber Sarayan Corporate Tower, Jose Vera Street, Ayala Center, Makati City	Xinrong Lin Chinese	Supervisor
SUNTUO CONSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT PHILIPPINES CORPORATION Unit 1001 Solar Harbor III, Roxas Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Changsheng Fu Chinese	Project Consultant
SUNTUO CONSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT PHILIPPINES CORPORATION Unit 1001 Solar Harbor III, Roxas Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Zhilong Li Chinese	Assistant Finance Manager
SHOPSTORE CORP. Unit 1, G/F Cityland Herrera Tower, 106 Val. Valero St., cor. Gamboa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Sanyakhuyaibing Thongkongngam Malaysian	President
SKY ARROW TECHNOLOGY, INC. 12/F Technogrid Tower, 6780 Ayala Ave., cor. 41 Tuna St., Makati City	Gary Wai Yam Lo Canadian	General Project Supervisor
SKY ARROW TECHNOLOGY, INC. 12/F Technogrid Tower, 6780 Ayala Ave., cor. 41 Tuna St., Makati City	Wing Kin Lo Canadian	Network Engineer
B.A.C. BARRIO FUERTE, INC. Lot 4-B, Ave. A, Almanza III, Las Piñas	Albert Barrientos Indonesian	General Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned applications, please communicate with the Regional Director.

ARTHURO G. ALEJANDRO
Regional Director

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

WHEREAS, under a Contract of Lease dated 12 January 2004, MK STUART V. YOUNG, doing business under the name and style "MS MIDDLE EAR & RESTAURANT" (hereafter the "DEBTOR") constituted Shangri-La Plaza Corporation ("SPLC"), a domestic corporation organized and existing under Philippine laws, with offices at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, EDSA Plaza corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, as its attorney-in-fact to sell at a public sale at auction, furniture, articles, merchandise or equipments and all other properties found and retained at the Storage Room, Basement Level of Shangri-La Plaza, EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, in order to effect the full or partial collection of the DEBTOR's outstanding obligations under the Lease;

WHEREAS, the requirements enumerated in the aforementioned Contract of Lease having been complied with, SPLC desires to proceed with the public sale of the DEBTOR's properties under Section 12.3 of said Contract;

NOW, THEREFORE, the undersigned hereby notifies the parties, the DEBTOR and the public-in-general, that on 17 December 2010 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning, or as soon thereafter, at the Storage Room, Basement Level of Shangri-La Plaza, EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, SPLC will sell to the highest bidder and for cash, Philippine currency, payable on the same date and place of the said public sale, the said properties.

Prospective bidders are hereby enjoined to investigate for themselves the title to the said properties as well as the terms and conditions of the public sale at the address above-given.

14 December 2010, Mandaluyong City.

SUAREZ & HARVADA LAW FIRM
Counsel for Shangri-La Plaza Corporation
3rd Floor, CLV Building
150 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village
Makati City

PSA - December 16, 2010

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BUSINESS

PH economy seen growing 6.5-7% in 2011

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE economy could grow 6.5-7 percent next year, sustaining this year's above-trend pace of expansion alongside a benign inflation environment, according to the chief economist of Banco de Oro Unibank.

BDO economist Jonathan Ravelas, in a recent investment forum, added that inflation next year would likely be stable at 3 percent on the basis of a more stable exchange rate and a recovery in the agricultural sector.

"Today the Philippines is seen in a different light. We are now perceived as a country with better macroeconomic fundamentals not seen in the last 35 years," Ravelas said. "We have experienced roughly 4% quarters of uninterrupted growth supported by low inflation, low interest rates and stable foreign exchange rates."

While it is quite clear that the United States and the rest of the world was still some distance away from full recovery, risks appeared to be in the final as its favorable demographics provided a steady labor supply supportive of consumer demand, Ravelas noted.

"Asia learned its lessons from the 1997 Asian financial crisis," he said.

Ravelas said he was very upbeat as he was deeply emboldened by the significant stability that has returned to Philippine financial markets.

"However, I would not advise any reckless just yet. There are still enough potential risks from the international scene that we should prepare for," he said.

Barring external shocks, Ravelas projected that local interest rates would remain stable with the three-month Philippine Dealing System Treasury Fixing Rate (PDSTF) likely ranging between 1.25 and 4.5 percent and the five-year PDSTF between 4 and 5.5 percent.

Ravelas added that he shared the view of most analysts that the peso would be even stronger in 2011 as capital flows to capital markets in the region would remain robust, alongside resilient overseas remittances.

He projected the local currency to range between 43 and 46 against the dollar next year, with a year-end closing forecast of 44.5:$1.

"A more stable exchange rate will have beneficial effects on interest rates that should help sustain the growth momentum," he said.

GMA 7 exec forecasts bigger profit in 2011

By Paolo G. Montecillo

EVEN WITH the absence of election-related advertisements, broadcast giant GMA Network Inc. said it expected its profit to continue rising in 2011 due to the strong economy and the efforts of an ad-cost increase implemented earlier this year.

GMA chair and CEO Felipe L. Gozon said the company's launch of new products, including smaller commercial slots and a free-airing dedicated news channel, should also help prop up the firm's top and bottom lines.

"We are going to do better next year," Gozon said, noting that he has been targeting GMA 7's shares on the local bourse in the past few months in deciding to route his confidence in the company's fundamentals.

"This year, we implemented a rate hike, which was resisted by our advertisers at first. But they have already accepted this," he said.

In the third quarter, GMA 7 posted a 20 percent drop in profit from a year ago following the decline in air time revenues with the absence of political advertisements that boosted earnings in the same period last year. Gross revenues slipped 10 percent to P3.3 billion while net profit dropped to P560 million from P788 million in the same quarter last year.

Gozon said the company's performance improved in the fourth quarter as advertisers had more placements after holding out at the start of the year to evoke any political advertisements.

The improvement in the country's economic prospects, he said, also helped boost the company's revenues.

"When the economy is bad, companies' advertising budgets are the first to be cut. But the economy is good and that has a direct contribution on the advertising budgets of our clients," Gozon said.

Gozon said he was also satisfied by the entry of the revitalized Associated Broadcasting Corp., operating under the brand TV5.

FedEx offers tips for packing, care and delivery of Special Holiday Packages

The holidays are the best time of the year to connect with your family/loved ones by sending that perfect gift. FedEx Corp. (NYSE: FDX) offers customers several solutions to help pack and ship precious packages this holiday season, from home-made cookies to the hottest toys to the most delicate ornaments.

"The extensive training and experience of FedEx team members allows us to provide our customers with the expert advice and solutions that take the guesswork out of holiday shipping," said T. Michael Glenn, executive vice president of Market Development at FedEx. "Our expertise, coupled with the reliability of the FedEx shipping network, means customers have one less thing to worry about this holiday season."

The professionals at FedEx have the solutions to help consumers ship faster, smarter and greener this holiday season.

SHIP IT SMART WITH FEDEX

Follow these easy packing and shipping tips from the experts at FedEx. You can also visit fedex.com/packaging for more helpful advice.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SUPPLIES

- Use sturdy boxes with flaps in fact. For heavier items, use double-wall boxes. Keep within the weight specifications for your box.
- Make sure your box is large enough to put adequate packing around contents. Position your item in the center of the box and surround by cushioning at least two inches, packing "peanuts," densely packed shredded paper or foam pads. Use enough packing material - usually one inch on all sides - so the item does not shift during transit.
- Use tape designed for packing, not duct or masking tape. Use the "H Tape" method to securely close all of the box flaps.
- Do not wrap the outer box with paper or string, which can get caught in automated processing equipment.

USE SMART LABEL INFO

- Position the address label squarely on the largest surface, and provide complete sender and recipient addresses, including phone numbers and ZIP codes.
- Put the recipient's address and your return address inside the box as well.

SET UP SHIPMENTS ONLINE

- FedEx Ship Manager at fedex.com was the industry's first Internet-based shipping system. To use, customers simply click the "Prepare Shipment Online" option under the "Ship" tab on the fedex.com U.S. home page, register for a user and follow the easy-to-use instructions. No extra software is required.

SHIP EARLY AND AVOID THE LINES

- Customers can log onto fedex.com to determine shipping options, including rates and transit times to ensure their gifts are shipped on an average day - and even more during the busy holiday shipping season.
- Customers can also confirm a package's status by calling FedEx local hotline at (02) 555-84-84.

SHIP IT GREEN WITH FEDEX

FedEx offers the following tips to get your package to its holiday destination while minimizing the environmental impact.

- Use the smallest box possible while adequately protecting your item. For fragile presents, double-box the gift for more protection while shipping and reuse an older box for the outer box.
- Purchase boxes made from recycled materials. FedEx envelopes are made from 100 percent recycled content. FedEx 10 kg and 25 kg boxes contain a minimum of 10 percent recycled content and are recyclable.
- If you must shred an invoice (tax, make sure the logos/ confirm with no notes, tears or corner clients. Remove any old labels to avoid confusion.
- Look for eco-friendly solutions to cushion your package's contents. FedEx suggests solutions such as shredded paper, biodegradable packing "peanuts" or lightweight used clothing.
- Make sure you package your product properly with the correct amount of cushioning material and utilize a sturdy corrugated shipping container. Remember that the less your package weighs, the fewer resources it will use.
- Ship with a company that has strong environmental priorities. By the end of 2010, FedEx will operate more than 338 hybrid and electric vehicles around the globe and more than 1,600 alternative fuel vehicles and equipment. The FedEx hybrid fleet has logged more than five million miles of revenue service since being introduced in 2004 - the equivalent of over 200 laps around the equator.

LIFESTYLE Food

A foodie's Christmas gift list

What delicious gifts to give and where to source them

YOU CAN feel it in the air. Christmas is fast approaching. Soon, there will be panic: What will I give for Christmas?

My wife Tessa and I go through the panic every year. There we were a little over decided to take matters into our hands and make the gifts ourselves—from print in black-on-satin dish containers.

We got very positive feedback, but it ruined our Christmas. We were making plans until the eve of Christmas! Fulfilling but not fun.

To help our readers cope with the stress of choosing Christmas gifts, here are suggestions that might help and will get you positive results:

WORD OF MOUTH

Sarah Raiz

1. Upside Down cake and Delicious Prune cake (tel. 5346359 or 5322693)

2. La Tarta Alfajor (tel. 4074744; 09053441)

3. Peak Chiang (0917-6122676)—Oriental Cake Inasal such as carrot walnut, banana walnut and poppy seed, as well as Chocolate Glutton (c/o Gil)

4. Blandamia Pie by Carolyn (4334698 and 0917-5796076)—One of the most unique and delicious pies I have ever eaten.

5. Pâtes de la Reine (09127-8119272)—Queen de Reis Chocos Cake and Lemon Crepe with Chestnut cream

6. Enzo's Old Fashioned Apple Pie (0915-2393730)—Winner of Great American Food Festival

7. Kitchen Jest (0917-8982040)—Mango Amaretto and Chocolate Obsession

8. Jill Sembrano (4975802), (8922-6262677)—Macadamia Sunsetted

9. Phil's Gold (0917-8471777, 424-2450 and 8472864)—Frozen Food for the Gods, also comes in chocolate flavor

10. Dulce Delirio (8139875, 4393869)—Double Fudge Cake

11. Gaston (4338045)—Garlic Ribs and Chocolate Lava Cake

12. Giant croquembois from Pompeya (0920-9478819)

13. Hot Mamas (0917-8508812)—Shaved Ice/icy mangga: perfectly sweet and mildly spicy thin strips of green mango

14. The Kraftsfiesta (8128474, 0920-9277658)—Queen-de-Sula Cheesecake

15. Gourmet Ladies (0917-8075905)—Magno Oriental version of leche. At the moment, the winner on my list.

16. Steven's Restaurant Chicken (0906-6062335)

17. Kaloi (3738788, 3746658 and 0908-8852875)—For catering, the best Mediterranean cuisine

18. Kenjen Miyuki Mitsu Machida (09189815945)—Ahhh all the acid-forming food, you need a neutralizer—water

So, there. I hope this list helps.

Merry Christmas and happy eating!

E-mail: sarah.raiz@yahoo.com

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ENJOY YOUR GLOBE, your way
Globe

PREMIUM coffee

HONEYBREAD Gelato

THIS elite brick-walled café has a wide and inviting selection of premium coffee blends, served either hot or cold.

Coffee plus gelato—hot and cold equals delightful

By Joseph Cortes
Correspondent

Caffe Ti-amo at Greenbelt 5 says it's the first to offer both under one roof

WHO DOESN'T love coffee? A mug of fresh brew does wonders to perk up your morning or liven up any moment of the day. If you need a quick pick-me-up, a cup of hot java is the answer.

And who doesn't love gelato? Yes, it's not just ice cream; this Italian confectionery uses only the freshest ingredients. And the myriad of flavors available or any gathering will surely do wonders to your inner child.

Coffee and gelato: One is hot, the other's cold, and never the twain shall warm. Could it be?

For those who must have their caffeine fix and sugar rush at the same time, the newly-opened Caffe Ti-amo at Greenbelt 5 offers those seeking either coffee or gelato a convenient one-stop hub that serves both delights.

Ti-amo is Italian for "I love you." Either you love coffee, gelato or all of the above.

Jollibee group marketing head Dean Gomez says Caffe Ti-amo is the only establishment in the market that serves both coffee and gelato.

"It is the only café that offers coffee drink, snow gelato and coffee creations in one shop," says Gomez. "Usually, most shops offer either just gelato or just coffee."

Caffe Ti-amo is a franchise from South Korea and is equally owned by Jollibee and Tourism-rich Pilipinas Inc. The brand has more than 200 outlets all over Korea, making it a familiar name to Korean expats in the country.

Casual feel

More than its selection of coffee drinks and gelato, the café sports a casual interior that brings inside the outdoors. Since the café is located in the middle of Greenbelt 5, a tree stands at the center of the café to provide guests a cozy outdoors feeling.

The interior is eclectic. Some walls are decked with red brick tiles. There is also an Amething tree measuring 7 sq m. Here, guests can do anything they like, "as long as it is legal and you order food," says Gomez.

For now, the restaurant has a menu of coffee-based and non-coffee beverages, tea, ice-blended coffee ad gelato frappes, chocolates and a selection of tea, its signature Affogato Vanilla or tiramisu gelato drowned in espresso and sprinkled with peanuts), waffle gelato and honeybread gelato.

For the Philippine market, the store offers savory waffles in Italian herb and four-cheese flavor. Caffe Ti-amo general manager Lily Chan says the savory waffles were introduced to give diners an option.

"When we looked at the original menu in Korea, it was everything was sweet," says Chan. "We know Filipino diners don't want everything to be sweet. That's why we have added something savory to the menu."

Caffe Ti-amo serves the usual coffee beverages: latte, cappuccino, mocha, caramel macchiato, americano and espresso. All coffee drinks comes in three (short), tho (tall) or tiramisu (large). A short serving of americano and espresso costs P75, while a short order of latte and cappuccino costs P99.

Coffee-based flavors

Apart from the coffee, a selection of Caffelatte Frappe is also available. The coffee-based flavor include mocha, caramel and tiramisu. It comes here as, location, including strawberry, yogurt and green tea, is also available for chil. chos and those wishing a caffeine free fix.

The short mocha and caramel Caffelatte frappes are priced at P79, while the others cost P89.

The ultimate coffee drink at Caffe Ti-amo is the affogato. An order is served in a three-pronged server that hold a cup of hot espresso, a scoop of gelato, and a little glass of smoked cashew nuts. Pour the nuts over the gelato, and then follow it with the espresso. You may stir it all together, scoop the melting gelato before you

drink the coffee, or whatever you feel like doing with it. There is no wrong or right way of enjoying the Affogato.

Then, there is the waffle gelato, where a golden waffle is topped with scoops of gelato and fresh fruits for a truly indulgent treat. The honeybread gelato, meanwhile, is thick slice of bee-vee-soaked bread toasted in honey and topped with a scoop of vanilla gelato.

Chan is proud of Caffe Ti-amo's selection of gelato. Made with 90-percent non-fat milk, it is a healthy treat for those watching their diets. Compared with other gelaterias, gelato here comes in four sizes: Piccolo (small), 160; Regular (regular), P95; Medio (medium), P129; and Grande (large), P189.

Variety of flavors

But more than the price is the variety of flavors available. There's vanilla, stracciatella and blueberry which are classic ice cream flavors; fruit flavors include melon, blueberry, orange and pina colada. Classic lovers can choose from dark chocolate, milk chocolate, stracciella (chocolate chip) and chocolate mint.

Rich flavors include tiramisu, dolce de leche, blueberry cheesecake, milk chocolate and caramelized fig, while more popular flavors include pistachio, peanut butter, vanilla pretzel and cookies and cream.

Those who want something less sinful can choose from strawberry yogurt and tropical sensation. A more say-a-like non-flavored gelato, which is a dairy-free ice cream, making it an ideal choice for the lactose-intolerant.

And, yes, if you want say si amo, Caffe Ti-amo is the perfect venue. Here, you can have your coffee and eat your gelato, too.

Christmas Tea Party at Peninsula

THE PENINSULA Manila's Conservatory features "Children's Christmas Storybook Tea Party," on Dec. 19, 3:30-5 p.m.

Enjoy quality time with your kids this Christmas. Your children's favorite story-books will come to life with Santa Claus, Christmas bear, peppermint canes, after-noon biscuit cookie decorating. Kids (or adult or child bookcase shipper) is P1,800. For reservations, call 8870888, e-mail restaurants@peninsula.com.ph or log on to www.peninsula.com.

Discount on Mercury Drug purchase through Citibank promo

Citibank features "Healthy Holidays at Mercury Drug," offering cardholders P500 off on their purchase at participating Mercury Drug branches.

For a single-receipt purchase of P20,000 using Citi card anywhere. On cardholders can get P500 off on their purchase at any Mercury Drug outlet. Single-receipt purchases, amounting to P15,000 or P1,500 with reward cardholders with a P500- or P100-discount, respectively, on their purchase. To redeem the charge slips, purchases must be at least worth P1500.

The promo is open to all principal and supplementary cardholders who use Citi credit card for savings qualified purchases anywhere in the Philippines and submit their charge slips at participating outlets nationwide.

Cardholders can redeem or use their charge slips until March 1, 2011. Simply present your Citibank card and loan an, tion the valid original credit card charge slip upon your purchase payment at participating stores.

This holiday promo offer will run until Dec. 31. For more information, visit www.citibank.com.ph.

Culinary showdown

The countdown to Asia's longest-running and most anticipated culinary events in the country has begun. A grand launch was held recently at Solaire Event Plaza to mark the return of the much-awaited Chefs on Parade 2011 happening Feb. 10-12, 2011, at the SMX Convention Center. With the theme "Ultimate Asian Showdown," expect a grand showcase from the best professionals and students as they display their scrumptious delicacies and skills in the different competitions. Watch celebrity chefs as they perform cooking demonstrations, indulge in food and beverage tasting, learn and discover useful tips on food styling, writing, wine pairing and appreciation. Take demonstrating and many more.

Call the Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines at 8 553 851, e-mail secretariat@hrap.org.ph.

Food promo

Sizzler Pepper Steak has come up with Sizzler Pepper Steak Lifeboo each Meals, your recipient, has Serenay to throwing festive gather logs in the office or kitchen.

Mini-one 8 Meals include individual party packs of Beef Pepper Rice (P149), Meatball Pepper Rice (P160), Pork Curry Pepper Rice (P180), Chicken Egg Pepper Rice (P170) and Pork BBQ Pepper Rice (P160).

All prices are inclusive of 12 percent VAT. For newly 10 orders of Mini-ove 8 Meals, get a free 1.5-liter bottle of Coca-Cola. Promo is valid until Jan. 31, 2011. The packaged meals are available at all Sizzler Pepper Steak stores, except the ones at Pacific Star and Promenade branches.

Hotel launches 'go green' Christmas

The Hotel Sofitel Solaire Philippines welcomed the Holiday Season recently with a Christmas tree lighting ceremony and the launch of its "go green" initiative. The event was attended by the hotel's clients, friends and partners.

Part of the hotel's go green initiative is to focus on an element of nature each year. With water scarcity becoming a global concern, we chose to adopt such theme this Season and for the entire 2011.

In line with this campaign, the hotel's Christmas ornaments are made of recycled materials of brown glass and twigs. Guests may purchase charity decoration balls, each representing a seedling that will be planted after them and donated to Haribon Foundation for a tree planting project in early 2011.

The tree-lighting ceremony was led by DOT Assistant Sec. Jenyen Mario Victoria Jasmin, DENR Undersecretary Demetrio Ignacio, Director Thomas Mundhenk-Lim of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau and Mayor Alfredo Lim.

Guests then adorned the tree with their charity balls to signify the hotel's partnership with Haribon Foundation.

Visit parapacific.com or call 3 685 100 and ask for the Buffet.

DELI PRODUCTS VIA PHONE, TEXT OR FACEBOOK

Jon de Leon, caterer-slow producer and celebrity manager, is offering homemade holiday delicacies that can be ordered through phone, text or Facebook.

The delicacies include "ground pimento" with a tinge of ebiap, liver or bonete filling; golden-brown chicken rellena stuffed with pimento corn and original chorizo de bilbao. Barbecue chicken wings and tender liver of pig.

De Leon used to serve these liver specialties during planning sessions, meetings or rehearsals during her star-managing times.

To order, call Tita Jay's Deli at 0917-6433737, 09 17-6177796, 0906-6665516, 9377293 or 4366811.

SLOPPY JOE BURGER
Chef Florabel Co opens a new concept restaurant, serving mainly American comfort food. Sweet Pea's Sloppy Joe makes for a fully satisfying burger treat. The 113-g Angus beef patty is loaded with thick homemade meat sauce, cheddar cheese, crispy bacon and coleslaw slathered on a toasting sesame bun. The burger is served with potato fries and a healthy side salad. Sweet Pea is at the G/F, The Venice Piazza, McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City (tel. 4398441).

THAI SPRING ROLLS WITH SHRIMP
Crostaccio (Rockwell Powerplant Mall, Makati City, tel. 7289442; Shangri-la Plaza Mall, tel. 6340886; Greenbelt 3, Makati City, tel. 757-3000; Alabang Town Center, tel. 7727968) offers Thai Spring Rolls with Shrimp, Oliver Meuniere, stir-Crab Martinez, Seafood Roll, Baked New Zealand Mussels, Razor-Clams in Chili Black Beans, Steamed Garlic Oysters, Cantonese Ribs, Shrimp Pad Thai, Salt and Pepper Squid. Crostaccio accepts catering and reservations.

Chicken Cordon Bleu Sandwich

DINING OUT

CAFE 1771 features sandwiches with a twist. Chicken Cordon Bleu, Ham and Cheese Fest, Grilled Cheese Sandwich, Tastes Cheese Toast, the Salami and Swiss Cheese Sandwich, Sabrina Sandwich and the Salmon Cheesburger.

Cafe 1771 is a member of the Chateau 1771 Group of Restaurants that include Senso 1771 in Greenbelt 3, Sentro 1771 in Salcedo, Bonifacio Global City and Chateau 1771 in Greenbelt 5.

Thai Red Duck Curry

The Bellevue's Cafe d' Asie features a special Christmas festive dinner buffet prepared by the hotel's executive chef Nick Anderson. Dishes include Thai Red Duck Curry, Stewed Salmon Fillet Teriyaki, Stuffed Turkey and Roast US Rib Eye (Med). Call 7735555.

Roast Duck

Big Buddha Forest Kitchen is now open at the 2/L, Greenbelt 5, Makati City. It features specialty Roasting dishes, as well as all-time Chinese favorites. The dishes include Roast Duck (portion, half or whole), Soya Chicken (half or whole), Roast Pork Belly, BBQ Pork Assado, Black Pepper Spareribs and Premium Roast Chicken (half or whole). Big Buddha Forest Kitchen's Chinese head chef Keung Sin Hai has further tweaked these Roasting Specialties, utilizing fresh gourmet ingredients in developing his very own, exclusive Chef's Specials. Braised Duck with Hot Bean Sauce, Sauteed Pork Belly and Beancurd in Secret Sauce, Sauteed Pork Spareribs with Onion in Black Pepper Sauce, Sauteed Diced Chicken with Hot Bean Paste Sauce, and Szechwan Chicken. All-time Chinese include Beef Broccoli, Sweet Tenderloin Chinese Style, Hong Kong Style Fried Crispy Chicken, Seafood Crispy Noodles, Premium Beef Hofan as well as specialty starters like Prawn Salad, Salt and Pepper Spareribs, Deep Fried Spicy Cuttlefish and Spicy Beancurd. Call 7290658 for inquiries and reservations.

Tiramisu al Cioccolato

Caterina's featured cake for the week is Tiramisu al Cioccolato, a cake with a tinge of espresso, coffee liquor and even a dash of vanilla sponge cake flavored with lady fingers and finished with a layer of chocolate ganache. For every order of the cake, customers will get a free cup of freshly-brewed coffee. Delivery hotline: 8736-19.

Gourmet hampers

Dusit Gourmet creates its special holiday delights—a variety of Dusit's Christmas Gift Hampers filled with homemade goodies and international delicacies such as Stollen bread, pudding, Mentor, Brunata Cheese, Confit de Canard and many more. Dusit Gourmet Hampers are priced starting at P2,199.

Lechon with Gata

Tastee Hot Buttered offers Coco-Mac, Pinoy merienda with Joel Indimedo, corn and tapioca for only P55. The chewy Coco Nutty Bar has coco bits and nuts for P55. The Lechon with Gata, the Pinoy favorite pork belly is drenched in coconut milk and ginger up with lechon, served with rice for P135. These items are available in other outlets of Tastee Hot Buttered in Metro Manila.

Prime rib

Nacho Buena will be more magical at 22 Prime Discovery Suites' specialty steak restaurant offers festive dinner buffet spread

TRUFFLES
Pralines Chocolates Suisses gets into the spirit of the season with pralines in Christmas designs. Whichlovers such as apple pie, earl grey, coffee and orange, each handcrafted piece is a treat that's difficult to resist. Made with Swiss chocolate and packaged in a dainty pink box, it is a gift that anybody will be happy to receive. For a more personalized touch, the pralines can be stamped with names and logo. Truffles and ganaches are also available. Log on to www.praliineschocolats.com.ph or call 4662985 / 0917 4963336. Praliine recently opened a kiosk in Alabang Town Center. The items may also be purchased from Classik's Deli in Serendra, and Blue Kitchen in Power Plant and Shangri-La Mall.

WARM PANDESAL
Pan de Manila unveils its holiday packaging, paper bag, tie cue and bread box with the design theme "Paskong Pinoy" created by noted illustrator Joel Chua. Now, the freshly baked pandesal and specialty breads of Pan de Manila can also be given as a gift in this season of giving. The design highlights a typical Filipino Christmas, a scene that can be seen in almost all houses during Media Noche. Pan de Manila's breads are freshly baked every hour beside old-style brick ovens. Call 6368468 or e-mail pandemanila_ilg@yahoo.com.

CHEESY SHRIMP BALLS
Lok Yuen offers all-time favorite Cantonese dishes. It has added new flavors to its growing menu: the Stir Fried Udon Noodle with Beef, Creamy Cheesy Shrimp Balls, Crispy Triple Rice, Steamed Poached Dumplings, Chik-Chow style and Curried Chicken Cubes. Lok Yuen offers group combos at menus at affordable prices. For eight to 10 persons, at menu 1 has 10 sizzling lavish dishes at P3,150 (P315 per head). For menu 2 for six to eight persons, at P3,000 (P500 per head), menu for a full feast with eight delicious dishes. For four to six persons, our menu 3, with six savor dishes, is at P1,140.

Lok Yuen branches are located at Glorietta 5, Ayala Center (tel. 8361199 1081), Cash & Carry (tel. 6378191), Greenhills Shopping Center (7134430/1681), SM Megamall B (6324096 to 98) and Alabang Town Center (7724962/8604).

Including the famous Prime Rib on Dec. 24 and Dec. 25, 7-10:30 p.m. Hotel guests and the public can attend the Christmas Day Roman Catholic Mass at the hotel lobby at 10 a.m. Call 7196800 or 7196871 or log on to www.discoverysuites.com.

Supreme Pizza

Sangsa offers refreshing dishes, such as Supreme Pizza, Seafood Linguini, Seafood Caesar Salad, Supreme Sampler, Shimmono-Style Grilled Baby Back Ribs, Country-Style Fried Chicken, Seafood Jambalaya, Shrimpe and Fibs Platter, etc. You can also take out these and celebrate Christmas at home or office. Burgers prepares them on a specially made foil packages to ensure its quality and freshness. Call 8317396, 8981111 or 6815066.

MAMA MIA CRAB MEDITERRANEAN
Buffish (G/L, new Esmeralda Mall, tel. 9000884) offers Korean Bulgogi Crab, Seafood Boil, Buffalo Shrimps, Fish Prego Panila, Tuna Teriyaki Burger, Calamari Pesto Negro, Chilean Seabass, Creamy Spaghetti, Crab Casino, Crab Singapura, Crab Paella, Oyster Rockefeller, Scallops and Chili Prawns Skewers. For dessert: Poached Pear Ala Mode, Choco Tart, Apple Walnut Crisp a la Mode and the Grape and Red Wine Syrup Smoothie and Cheesecake.

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MECHANICS

KRUPS Dusit Thani

Anna Olson in Manila: Bracing for the 'fear factor' in Filipino cuisine

COUNTRY COOKING

Mickey Pineda

The Canadian food broadcaster loves 'lechon' and is eager to try Pampango 'kamaru' or locust

ANNA OLSON looks prettier in person than on her television cooking shows. "Fresh" and "honest," both aired on the Asian Food Channel (AFC). Those who watch her shows every week told me the Lucky Summer in person.

She was in Manila recently to conduct a cooking demo at the Ayala Mall. She demonstrated how to do whole roasted pork loin with roasted root vegetables, warm bitter taro and maple walnut ice cream.

The bitter taro, she said, is the easiest desserts of choice in Canada, a basic pastry with a custard-like filling. Of course, maple syrup had to be included, and it became part of our conversation at the dinner hosted by the Canadian ambassador Christopher Tooley if the real maple syrup should be made available here, because what we get is syrup with food coloring and artificial aroma. A friend once sent me a small bottle and I savored that through weeks. And I do mean it. But I also learn that even in Canada, the demand for maple syrup can't even be met.

We also talked about culinary and other Canadian food experts. Did you know that they do bring in pork and chicken?

Sitting at our table, the professionally trained pastry chef was looking forward to going to Pampanga to savor the local food. Rian does one want to explain the special ness to someone who has never been here?

But Anna Olson said she knows some of our cooking. She said she studied with many Filipinos in Toronto whose names she could still recall. One of them was Enrique Belmonte, she said, which made us laugh. Another classmate, she said, was either Marivel Maria Evelyn.

One of the dishes she remembers is lechon. She said she remembered attending a Filipino classmate's birthday party and she was greeted by the head of the lechon. And so she was glad to taste lechon again on her Manila visit, and was sold on how hot fresh that she enjoyed it. Irish openness to other cuisines is what makes her a good chef.

Wince-inducing food

But why is the "fear factor" the first to be named by Filipinos when foreigners ask which local food to eat? I think we take a wicked delight in seeing one cringes inside.

Rebar was mentioned that evening and sometime is headed on our to describe what it is. I hope that Maria Brown, one of the founders of APC, who was seated beside me, didn't lose her appetite. But she must be used to Asian food by now.

Anna Olson said that tasting before would have to wait because she still was grazing herself up for the "chicken" she was told should be tasted when she would go to Pampanga. She meant the male cockers, or kamaru, something ordered that one every-one-over-considers edible.

The talk then went to antipasto, the Cordillera chicken dish. I had to set things right and explain that the slight bruising of the chicken, when done right, streamlines the food right away and that those who do it properly include scratching to the possum tonight. But in that newsletter, I did add that the person is also called "killing me softly."

Dinner was a number of Canadian pro-

CHEF Anna Olson (middle) flanked by Maria Brown of APC and Canadian Ambassador Christopher Tooley

dishes and cooking. But the menu included a dessert called "whoopee" that had the Canadian era in common. It "whoopee pie."

Someone said the whipped is a specialty in Montreal—a chocolate-covered marshmallow with a raspberry filling and a biscuit underneath. It looked like—and had the feel of—Peeps Crunch, chocolate-covered ice cream with circle of ice crisps.

Of course, having said that, pinoys had to be explained, and along with that, the dishes of Pampanga, both treasures too. Ultimately it brought us back to balut, the treasure duck's egg.

I know that Anna Olson will go home with some understanding of our cuisine and I hope that in one of her TV shows, she will show the world how to do one of our "shocking" dishes.

E-mail pinoyfood1997@yahoo.com

THE QUIET DINER

BISTRO AT A GLANCE

Epicurean delights at Ayala Triangle resto row

It is the perfect place to find pleasure for the eyes and the palate

WE COULD not have imagined that the "favored" Ayala Triangle, bounded by Ayala, Paseo de Roxas and Makati Avenues, could be transformed into a lovely arena of awesome dancing Christmas lights and a string of sensational restaurants offering a variety of food.

Yes, the Ayala have done just that.

The Triangle

It is the perfect place to find pleasure for the eyes and epicurean cravings. Consumers can savour it easily from the three main entrances bounding it. In the evening (the best time to be there), private vehicles will find parking space, some located in the basement facilities of connected buildings in the area. Don't worry the moment a guard in uniform is raised by their supervisor, will be'soo in.

Definitely this is the place to bring children to, for isn't Christmas their time of merriment? The multicolored lights simulate torrents of rain pouring from the star to ship the parish "dance" and music plays. The kids marvel, and the parents and yayas can share in their joy.

The restaurant row is located on one side the triangle. Because of the big crowd that gathers every night, especially on weekends, it would take time to be seated in spite of tables and chairs outside each restaurant.

Bon Chicken

This place reminds one of the Golden Bird found in Ermita. It offers perfectly fried chicken with a delightfully crispy skin, devoid of any roasting. It does can get richer the Original, the Combo or alternatively, Chops.

That's not all to buy. There are appetizers, friends kits and meals. So early to avoid missing the chickens, the dramatic go very fast.

Wfest

An outfit that believes breakfast food is an all-day thing for most Filipinos. So find your cuisine and longest, in fact any time of the day and night.

Golden Spoon

The specialty is Frozen Yogurt. Order either in a cup or cone. Choose your topping (which will cost you extra)— peanut butter, Belgian choco, etc.

Wee Nam Kee

The latest to open, and is supposedly serving the famous Chicken Rice from the equally well-known main outlet in Singapore. The set have not tried, but will, eventually soon.

Most add service and government charges. They honor Senior cards.

Rating -

RATING INDEX: Poor | Good | Excellent

LIFESTYLE Food

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Instead of 'arroz caldo' for Noche Buena–why not Sancocho de Pollo?

It's a Colombian meal that Sister Luz, Capuchin nun, cooks with a lot of heart

TODAY IS all about Luz Marie Buenaga, Capuchin Tertiary Sister of the Holy Rosary, one of the most genuine and warmest of souls I've ever met.

Not only is she a pro in politics, but she's a whiz in the kitchen, who learned the rudiments from her mother. Her whiz stems from necessity, hearty obviously done with a lot of heart, soul and pure love.

The usual Noche Buena cooked on the evening of Dec. 5, for the 5th Guerilla dinner of Pinoy Movie Week was unacceptable, so much so that last Sunday, I cooked the same dish. Answer this, for my family to enjoy. Needless to say they, too, loved it. My Mommy Boy remarked: "It's so good, yet I don't know what makes it so, so tasty!"

Sister Luz feasts on sopas: up she runs like a mother hen alongside fellow Capuchin sisters. Together they look after 32 girls "from ages 6, till they are done with college." We help them get a job and they leave only when we are certain they can stand on their own," as she puts it.

"It is a long-term service, because we do not believe having the children in the institution for two to three years will make a difference. After that, where do they go? They go back to the streets!"

"The goal is to change their lives completely, but they must cooperate. We have an [illegible]

KITCHEN RESCUE

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WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

Giant Lantern Festival
CITY OF SAN FERNANDO

GIANT LANTERN FESTIVAL

Baked Tuna and Black Olive Pasta, Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies—chef Jill Sandique's fuss-free holiday treats

Janice de Belen also whips up her own creation—Orange Cranberry Butter

By Yasmin Baga-Reyes

AS ALWAYS, quick and easy yet delicious recipes make for a fuss-free holiday feast. With less clutter in the kitchen, you get to enjoy the fun on the table with your family and friends, and still delight them with your culinary creations.

Pastry chef Jill Sandique and celebrity mom/television host Janice de Belen share easy-to-do dishes for the media launch spread, such as baked Tuna and Black Olive Pasta, Steamed Carrots and Cheese Bread, Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies, and Lemon and Chocolate Chip Loaf.

In order to speed up the cooking and baking process and cut down on tempting preparations, they both use Glad cooking products.

"Busy parents have been developed for Glad by Sandique, known for her aura rival, cocoa de and pardons. They're designed so holiday treats for the food enthusiasts who can prepare them at home, to be given out either as gifts or as potluck dishes during office parties.

Sandique has picked three dishes because they can be done in a jiffy. As a traditional chef, she opts to use wooden spoons and wire whisk instead of the ultra-modern tools available in the market.

She says her recipes are easily to make by any homemaker, even those without high-powered gadgets. She also gives high marks for Glad products like Glad Cook 'n' Bake and Glad Ovenware.

"I really use these products because they're very convenient and easy to work with," she says.

An essential kitchen aid, Glad Cook 'n' Bake has specially designed nonstick coating, so baking can save time by skipping the need to grease the pan. Sandique warns that wax paper should not be used when baking, since it easily melts and burns, thus defeating the basic of the Glad gift.

The heat-proof Glad Ovenware is also practical in transporting dishes. After baking and cooling food properly, one can simply put the lid back on and cover it with the Glad Ovenware, and it's good to go to the Christmas gift.

The containers are reusable. Glad Ovenware makes it possible to have food from the oven brought straight to the table, and food from the freezer to the refrigerator and to the oven.

De Belen, who says she's a fan of Sandique's, has been attending baking workshops with Sandique at the Center for Asian Culinary Studies. She shares here her Orange Cranberry Butter.

The spread is ideal for toast and bread, pancakes, pan de sal and biscuits. It's also perfect as part of Christmas morning meal, or even as a gift placed in cute GladWare containers to keep it fresh.

PASTRY CHEF Jill Sandique presents ready-to-serve Baked Tuna and Black Olive Pasta

JANICE de Belen places cookie dough into a baking pan.

BAKED Tuna and Black Olive Pasta

ORANGE Cranberry Butter on French bread

OATMEAL Cranberry Cookies

LEMON and Chocolate Chip Loaf

BAKED Garlic and Cheese Bread

Baked Tuna and Black Olive Pasta

400 g. penne rigate, cooked and drained

1/3 c olive oil

½ c chopped onion

1 tbsp minced garlic

1 (420-g) can tomato sauce

1 (180-g) can tuna chunks in oil

½ c sliced black olives

6 pcs fresh basil leaves

salt and black pepper, to taste

shredded mozzarella cheese, for topping

grated parmesan cheese, for topping

kitchen timer

Sauce:

¼ c butter

¼ c all-purpose flour

2½ c fresh milk

nutmeg, to taste

salt and ground white pepper, to taste

In a saucepan, heat olive oil. Add the onion and garlic. Cook until translucent. Add the tomatoes and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes. Add the tuna and black olives. Cook briefly. Add basil leaves. Season with salt and black pepper. Toss in cooked pasta. Transfer to a Glad Ovenware 9 x 13 pan. Set aside.

In a nonreactive saucepan, melt together butter and flour. Add the fresh milk and cook until slightly thickened. Season with nutmeg, salt and white pepper. Pour béchamel sauce over pasta. Top with shredded mozzarella cheese and grated parmesan cheese. Place Glad Ovenware 9 x 13 pan on a half-sheet pan. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 30 to 40 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven and allow the baked pasta to rest for five to 10 minutes. Serve hot.

Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies

¾ c unsalted butter

1/3 c granulated sugar

¾ c brown sugar

1 large egg

½ tsp pure vanilla extract

1 tbsp honey or light corn syrup

¾ c rolled oats

1 1/3 c sifted all-purpose flour

½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

1/8 tsp salt

1 c dried unsweetened cranberries, coarsely chopped

¾ c walnuts, chopped

Yield: 22 to 24 pieces

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a cookie sheet with Glad Cook 'n' Bake Paper for ease. In a bowl, cream butter, granulated sugar and brown sugar until light. Add the egg, vanilla extract and honey or light corn syrup. Mix well.

In another bowl, toss together oats, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add to the creamed butter mixture. Add the cranberries and walnuts. Blend well.

Scoop cookie dough into balls and place on Glad Cook 'n' Bake Paper-lined cookie sheets. Bake for 12 to 14 minutes or until done. Cool completely. Store cookies in GladWare containers.

Lemon and Chocolate Chip Loaf

¾ c butter

1 c sugar

grated zest of one lemon

¾ tsp lemon extract, optional

2 large eggs

1½ c sifted all-purpose flour

½ tsp baking soda

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

½ c sour cream

2 tbsp lemon juice

1/3 c dark chocolate chips, or more

Yield: two 7 x 3-inch loaves

Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease and line two 7 x 3-inch loaf pans with Glad Cook 'n' Bake Paper. Set aside.

In a bowl, cream butter, sugar, lemon zest and lemon extract until light. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Fold in dry ingredients alternately with sour cream.

Lastly add the lemon juice and chocolate chips. Blend well.

Pour the prepared loaf pans. Bake for 50 minutes or until done. Cool to pan for 10 minutes, then invert onto a cake rack. Cool completely. Wrap with Glad Cling Wrap or Glad Aluminum Foil.

Roasted Garlic and Cheese Bread

Dough

450 to 500 g bread flour

75 g polenta

½ tsp ground black pepper

2 tsp salt

1 tsp instant yeast

1 tsp hot sauce

1½ c water

75 g chopped sweet red bell pepper, sautéed then cooled

½ tsp fresh or dried parsley, optional

Filling

10 cloves roasted garlic

1 c grated sharp cheddar cheese

1 c shredded mozzarella cheese

sliced onions

chopped pimiento

sliced olives

sun-dried artichokes

sliced mushrooms

cooked ham, bacon, salami, etc.

broccoli and other vegetables, blanched

In mixer bowl, put together flour, polenta, black pepper, salt, instant yeast, hot sauce and water. Blend well.

Knead dough for four minutes on low speed, then increase mixer speed to medium. Knead the three minutes then lower speed again. Knead for another two minutes.

Dough must be smooth and elastic. Add the sautéed bell pepper and parsley. Form dough into a ball. Place in an oiled bowl and cover with Glad Cling Wrap. Allow dough to rise for 1 to 1½ hours, or until double.

Meanwhile, line a half-sheet pan with Glad Aluminum foil. Fold another piece of Glad Aluminum foil into a 6 x 14-inch rectangle. Set aside. Flatten dough into a 12-inch square, about ¼-inch thick. Top with cheese, toasted garlic, onion, pimiento, olives, artichokes, mushrooms, cured meats and blanched vegetables. Roll up into a cylinder and pinch along long edge to seal. Glide onto the Glad aluminum foil rectangle and transfer to prepared half-sheet pan. Proof for 30 to 60 minutes, or until double.

Egg wash, if desired. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 45 to 60 minutes or until done. Remove from oven and cool for 20 minutes. Serve warm.

Orange Cranberry Butter

1 c unsalted butter, softened

1/3 c cream

1/3 c coarsely dried cranberries (soaked in warm water)

½ orange juice and zest

Whip butter and cream together. Add orange juice then zest and chopped cranberries. Pipe into molds.

Lechon pizza for a Pinoy Christmas feast

PIZZA HUT'S latest pizza invention is Pizza Hut's Lechon Pizza.

Pizza Hut's Classic Crust is topped off with layer after layer of traditional lechon sauce, premium lechon meat, delectable cheese and roasted garlic, finished off with crispy bits of lechon.

Introducing the Pizza Hut Lechon Pizza recently was international basketball star Vince Hizon, together with his wife, sportscaster Patricia Bermudez-Hizon, and their two boys, Vicenzo and Patti.

"Our family always has lechon for Noche Buena," said Hizon. "And the sauce of the Lechon Pizza really made me feel like it's christmas already. Surely, you would want to give it as a gift ... you've tasted it. We're sure fellow friends and families will enjoy a grand holiday feast each time they come together over Pizza Hut's Lechon Pizza."

Pizza Hut is known for its Pan Pizza and popular [illegible] ... almost each of Stuffed Crust Pizza, Cheesy Volcano, Cheesy Crust and Ultimate Cheese.

"The Pinoy's palate calls for rich flavors, so we created the traditional Filipino feast with the right and taste of lechon," said Edgar Allan Gopez, advertising and promotions manager of Pizza Hut Phils. "This is why we created the Lechon Pizza—to satisfy the Pinoy's need for rich-flavor food this holiday season."

The new Lechon Pizza is available at any Pizza Hut dine-in restaurant. Or call 911-1111 for Metro Manila deliveries. Visit www.pizzahut.com.ph or "Like" us on Pizza Hut Philippines on Facebook to get the latest updates and promotions.

MEDICard's Christmas treat III!!!
Exciting gifts await lucky members!
Promo period is from October to December. Log on to www.medicardphils.com, or visit the MEDICard and Humana clinics and fill out the Christmas Treat form*
*Subject to terms and conditions

Instead of 'arroz caldo' for Noche Buena—why not Sancocho de Pollo?

From page B1

this orphanage. He can't be heard to say. They count and play with us on their own free will.

"Our wish is to recover their dignity. We want them to be. Here they have nothing to lose, so we make sure we care for them in every possible way, we pay for psychologists, for clothes, for everything. It is like having a child of your own, only that there are 72 of them. Thank God, the Lord is good and always provides, he sends people to help us with our mission," adds Sister Lut.

To see Sister Lut with the girls is to see love in action. It is truly amazing.

Colombian dish

Colombian meals are shared with family, in laughter and conversation. Usually says Sister Lut, "every weekend, families go to their grandparents' and eat. One of the dishes often prepared is sancocho.

"Before, sancocho (soup or stew) was just for fiestas; it was so simple, but then it became so famous. There are different ways of preparing it—with fish, pork, beef, three kinds of meat, chicken with plantains, yucca, cilantro, corn and potatoes.

"So we, it is not the meal it will but the joy of being together," says Sister Lut.

If there is a one dish I must run you and share with your family this Christmas, it is sancocho—instead of, say, arroz caldo for Noche Buena!

Sancocho de Pollo

2 tbsp garlic
1 large onion, sliced
1 whole chicken, chopped up
8-10 c water
3 large potato
3 container of yucca
2 green cobs
2 cobs on the cob, halved and cut into thirds
1/3 c green onions, white and green part
cilantro
● In a pot, bring chicken, onion and garlic to simmer 30 minutes.

SANCOCHO de Pollo

● Remove chicken, add rest, potatoes.
● When soft, add yucca / cassava and potatoes.
● Simmer until soup becomes thick and starchy. You may have to add more water if you want more soup. Potatoes, soup should be thick and starchy in consistency.
● Season to taste with salt. Sister Lut says add Knorr seasoning until you are satisfied.
● Add green onions and cilantro.
● To serve: Put sancocho in a bowl, add rice and calos.
● If you find rice overcooks, cut it with the soup.
● Serve with calos.

SISTER Lut and the girls

Saba

2 c bananas, diced
1 c raisins
1/2 c grated cassava
1 tbsp garlic
2-3 tbsp vinegar
Lemon juice and zest, to taste
1/3 c olive oil
¼ c water
● Mix
● Season to taste and serve with sancocho.

As for Sister's Christmas wish, "I hope everyone recognizes Jesus in their hearts. When we find Him in us, truly alive, we discover the beauty of life, we change, we become better and when we are better, we then realize we have a responsibility to do something good, to change the world. This is the essence of Christmas."

And for those who wish to share, Sister Lut likes to say "We are always in need of help: sardines, food, laundry, supplies, things the girls need for school. We are professional beggars for the glory of God and for the future of the girls."

For now, their orphanage could use new electric fans, flat irons and a television set.

To help, please contact Sister Lut at 7267002 / 09(17-3228677).

Email [redacted]

BUILT IN.
BUILT TO LAST.
LA GERMANIA
LIFE PROOF

French treats for Christmas

CHRISTMAS 42 Days is around food. The Cinquembrelle is a towering cone of profiterole filled with pastry cream and covered with rich Belgian Chocolate icing. There are four variations: Raspberry, with Belgian White Chocolate Cream, with Dark Belgian Chocolate; Mocha, with a combination of Dark and White Belgian Chocolate; and Tiramisu, with roasted chopped pistachio and Red Belgian Chocolate.

Entrées include Smoked Salmon topped with Cream, Caramelized Apples on Brie and Roasted Walnuts and Blue Cheese Gratinè.

Among the hot dishes are Rico's signature Tea-Hour Roast Beef, cooked slowly for 10 hours to seal in the goodness. The Yuletide Herb Crown Roast offers tender and juicy ribs with stuffing of sweet sausage, chestnuts and rosemary apples.

Cote de Boeuf, the USDA Rib-Eye Roast Beef, is first smoked with pine wood chips, then roasted to perfection in the Turkey Roast, the classic dish for holiday celebrations, comes filled with rich stuffing.

Complementing these dishes is Rico's "Le Provençe" pastries, which offers a wide selection of meats, cheeses, pates, chicken, pork and beef dishes.

Rico's Christmas Cake for 2011 is the Strawberry Daiquiri, made with layers of chocolate Macaron de Paris with crème Agave and sour topped with fresh strawberries, raspberry coulis and edible gold leaf encircled by dainty pink Lady Fingers.

STRAWBERRY Daiquiri

Those craving for chocolate can choose from Bumbu, Opera, Nirvana, Amore, Tiramisu and Boca. Rico also offers Oatmeal, mousse Pistachio-style cheesecake in blueberry mango and strawberry.

Weight-watchers can enjoy Jello Sugarless and Pinnalina and Nanito Sugarless. There's also Strawberry Shortcake and Bibingka, a light raspberry mousse between layers of mousse Bavarois layers of mango chiffon cake. All cakes come in personal, wish and grande sizes.

There's Rico Macaroon de Paris, Sandwich Chocolate Truffles, made with Valrhona chocolates come in 12 flavors and four sugar-free varieties.

For easy gift-giving, customers can choose any item and Rico can create a pack filled with delicacies. Call 8126815/ 8126827 loc. 202/ 0917-4736250. E-mail bitsandmo@gmail.com, or log on to www.bitsandmore.com.

LIFESTYLE Food

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

CROWD gathers around a burning Café Adriatico Monday night. (Photographed by Carlos Celdran)

What a scare

The night Manila thought it lost a lifestyle landmark

THAT WAS a close call. We thought Manila had lost a lifestyle landmark.

Last Monday evening, fire struck Café Adriatico in Malate, Manila, threatening to an extension of the LJC chain which owns and operates the café. The fire started in the kitchen but the exhaust duct sucked the flames up and out to the second floor. The bar on the second floor was then badly damaged.

The ground floor, however, was intact. Better still, the paintings weren't destroyed, just water-damaged.

Café Adriatico, like many LJC restaurants, houses the paintings of noted artist/artress/bon vivante G. Aguilar Cruz, the café's founder and father of Larry Cruz who opened the LJC chain of restaurants with his father.

Café Adriatico, which opened in January 1979, was born out of the love of antiques of the Cruz father-and-son tandem.

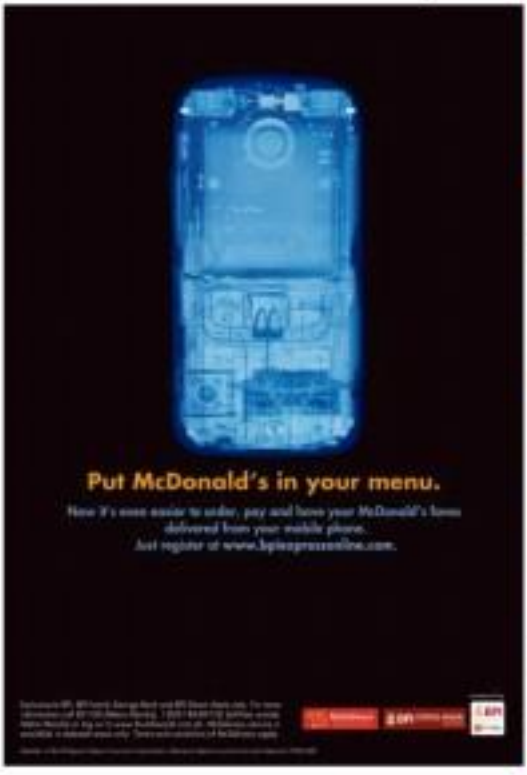
By using antiques, the father's paintings and Filipiniana furniture, Larry Cruz, proved to the restaurant scene in the '80s how ambiance and good food made unbeatable combination.

The fire didn't destroy Cruz's well-loved decor fixtures. "We must be making his presence felt. I believe he was looking after his café and the things he loved," said Lorna Ambas, Cruz's daughter, who took over the LJC chain after his father's death in 2008.

"The eagle, wood pillars and arcs weren't damaged at all," she added. Ambas was referring to the wooden eagle carving above the kitchen counter, that became a visual reminder of Café Adriatico.

Café Adriatico started the café craze in Metro Manila in the '80s. [*See report of Larry Cruz's story on page E7.*]

It will be temporarily closed for repairs, but Café Havana, across the Remedios Circle, will be open for breakfast and lunch to serve the café regulars.



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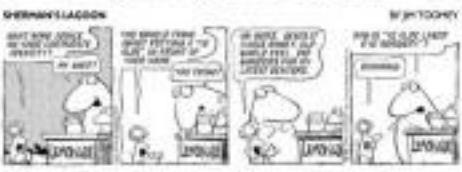


TULDOK — BY MARA COLI

Laging nakikinig ng drama sa 8:00 AM / 9:00 AM / 1:00 PM / Lunes hanggang Biyernes

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS GRAVE

YOU SHINE TODAY You have a good sense of humor and an abundant supply of energy. You have a lot of imaginative ideas of your own, but in difficult times you can contribute some much needed practicality. Your friends will look to you for support and you will be glad to give it. Tomorrow something or someone unusual drops by.

ARIES (March 21 to April 20) You're unusually optimistic, carefree and fun-loving today. You're at the peak of your physical power. Something important to do with publishing, learning, or business matters could make you happy.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You feel very generous to others today, perhaps because someone is being generous to you. Generosity is really number one on the list.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Problems with contacts and close friends are manifest today. This is an easy day to deal with members of the general public and genuinely enjoy everyone.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) It's a pretty boring day at work, however. Don't make promises you can't fulfill. Be careful about decisions that you promise to others. You cannot ... Romantic interests fluff.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) It's early only for one sign? This is a wonderful day for romance, love affairs, emotions, and personal relationships with children. The romantic implications of close business are exciting!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) You'll make considerable progress at home today. All family matters are optimistic and go well. Similarly, repairs are enthusiastic about family love. Someone you've been attracted to is also attracted to you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Today's your good-luck half day. In fact, it's half full of optimism! You feel hopeful about the future and happy to be alive.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) It's a very good day to make love and conversation. However, it is possible to be misheard. Sunday replies. Nevertheless, your positive aspect follows and probably justified.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Today you have the energy to get down to almost any task that you want. You feel energetic and ambitious. Your mind is sharp, and you're ready to take on the world.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You feel quietly popular with yourself and others today. It's easy to be contented. This is a very enjoyable day.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Former situations will be called upon today? You can be very effective, successful in dealing with small groups on this endeavor. Everyone wants to see your face.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Income, assets, matters, IOUs and even the dollar are emphasized with you today. Standing guard against the temptation to make promises you can't deliver. Get back to your good PR. Be willing to listen to what others have to say.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs and www.sudoku.com

Answers for yesterday's puzzle

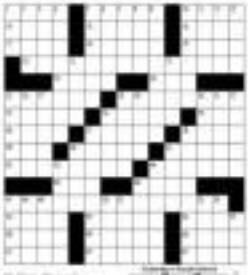
5	7	9	1	6	3	2	4	8
3	1	8	2	4	9	5	7	6
6	4	2	5	8	7	1	3	9
1	5	3	6	9	2	8	4	7
4	8	6	3	7	1	9	2	5
9	2	7	8	5	4	3	6	1
2	6	4	9	3	5	7	8	1
8	3	1	7	2	6	4	9	5
7	9	5	4	1	8	6	5	3

Concepts Sudoku By Jose Farris

		2		9		8		
	1		8		6		7	
8		7				5		
	3			1			8	
6				5			1	
	5					3		9
3		8		1		4		
	2		7			8		

Difficulty level ★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



How Café Adriatico—and Manila's café lifestyle—came about

By Leroy J. Cruz

(Excerpted from the essay "The Good Life" in the book, "Malate: A Matter of Taste," published in 2005 by the UP Restaurant Group and The Bookmark Inc. In 2008, Leroy Cruz passed away.)

WHEN I came to the turn in the seventies—and that day may not be true for all—I left off cooking lunch on my posts in the restaurants. I will recall the environment I felt: an magazine editor and columnist in the Yap Quezon years before Imp during another (or not her name) and a handful of close friends. The beginning of the first Café Adriatico on the Remedios Circle in Malate.

Without realizing it, my life took an irreversible turn that balmy evening. It was now year of 1980.

No one knew it began so, but lately I wonder what I would have been doing today had I not listened to a stranger and visited a little antiques shop on the corner of M. Adriatico and Remedios Streets from a restaurant.

Although I knew her since late before, I allowed David Sharruff to talk me into a partnership in a restaurant. He said he knew all about the business as his father, Sammy, a Syrian national, owned a popular restaurant in Morocco. I thought my shop would make an ideal place for what he had invented.

In the '60s and '70s, Ermita, not Malate, was the place for fine dining, with mostly Iranian restaurants and sometimes making up the clientele. The legendary matre d', who would join me in 1982 as manager of my chief restaurant, Bistro Burgos, it was perhaps the unusually elegant restaurant on El Burgos Street in Makati that established my reputation as a restaurateur. However, I had to give it up 10 years later, though, when the landlord decided to build on the site the office building it owns. I felt sad when they tore down the old house under the big mango tree.

Appealing idea

Incred, my partner, was persuasive, although, it turned out, there was no need to be. The idea of having my own restaurant holds as a hallucinatory dream strongly appealed to me. I recalled the French sidewalk cafés I visited many times with my father, who, I suspected, had accepted the profession of architecture precipitously against my misgivings in 1955. It appeared to be less stressful to read a book or work on his sketches at the sidewalk tables of Café de la Paix.

In my mind, I saw myself "watching the world pass by just beyond my table," to recall an introduction to our early menus, while sipping espresso and listening to an accordionist play "Under Paris Skies."

I fancied being an occasional host—save to Uncle Sammy from his lonesome Blind mornings, and I imagined it all as delivering my father's face and my old man's dazzling him in return just to show off. I saw him do this once in Montmartre to the delight of fellow tourists whom the ambassador obliged by sketching their portraits.

Much was our admiration of the French in vie in the '60s among around. At the time I was about to leave a 12-year bureaucratic career alternating as a Malacañang spokesman and purveyor of, oh, cultural information. Widely hailed when it was imposed in September 1972, martial law was beginning to lose.

Throughout the decade, Imelda Marcos kept people entertained with lavish cultural shows while her husband tightened his grip on the political system. The Cultural Center, which Nitoy Aquino disdainfully called Imelda's Cement, was erected, and the Kanlaonan ng Loki Pendo unfolded with unclouded pageantry.

At one time, Imelda quite literally tried to raise the whole country by commissioning an avant-garde artist to organize Ugnayan, an ethnic-music symphony using indigenous instruments. Different sections of the "music" were to be played in different indentations from Aguri to Jolo at a designated time. All inhabitants of the islands were to be alerted to the sounds over their blaring tv cruise ears near-live musical composing.

What came out was just as euphoric: Mr. Marcos yawned in front of TV cameras and nodding music was heard from the unlicensed music composers.

Casual lifestyle

Manilenos needed a break from the Imeldific extravaganzas. They hankered for a spontaneous and casual lifestyle, which they would not be able to find in the fine-hair hotels and pricey restaurants. In summer, coffee and ice-cream shops and Chinaman's noodle joints were hot politics. The hip and early yuppies needed something new and, in Malate, we hoped to give it to them.

David was into jazz and I was. "Let's call it Jazz Inn," he said as he yanked out the old "Kalabayan" brass sign in my Bohlevard Antiques store. I had other ideas but decided to defer to David's.

Bohlevard was born in 1979 when I, an amateur antiques collector and envious of Dick Upkins and Mon Bejar's Gallery Shop, saw a rundown custom-built third-storied house in the tony streets of Remedios Street and Dakota, now M. Adriatico.

I thought it would make an antiques shop, and so I rented it for P800 a month. I then stuffed it with old Filipino furniture and an intricate of Kundiman, artistic fabrics, screen and rares of the century prints, things I originally bought for my own pleasure.

Around the Plaza de la Mejor de los Remedios, later to be known as Remedios Circle, were Edgar Ramirez's fashion mansion, the Fish Pan restaurant of Malabon fame, and Ernesto Santiago's two-story boutique-store named Santiago de Manila.

Across from Santiago's, fashion guru Pitoy Moreno, still young designer Mike de la Rosa would open his boutique-store, antique dealer Ed Fuentes and Nilda Swanson would launch Silver, the Gift, and a group of women would relocate their Penguin Café to the Circle not long after.

Santiago's other plaza, Cora Batuna, attracted the gay set and then moved on the other side of Remedios Street, after Cora closed. Café Adriatico provided shelter to the displaced denizens of disco. Before long, Santiago tried one more time to recapture the days of Cora Batuna by converting his fashion boutique into a champagne bar called Zee Zee. He continued to use the second floor as his workshop. Zee Zee didn't last long. Santiago eventually gave up the whole property.

I took over the place and opened Ang Bistro sa Remedios on the ground floor. Much later, I suggested by my good friend and PR guru Veronica Papa, he renovated Juan Bon on the second floor; this time with reverse-discjockey "Brother Wayne" Ilnap at the sound control booth. David Sharruff would have given me than I told you so look.

Opening-night fiasco

In 1987, against the advice of my mother, Inky J. Cruz, and friends, I ... opened three restaurants within one roof: Unang Hirit Tavern, Paper Moon diners and the Italian restaurant Frugo.

I called it the Good Life Cross, Inc. On the night we inaugurated the seven style building, we closed the entire Remedios Circle to traffic and staged Malacañang-style street party. I will never forget what happened next.

While preparing for the evening's big bash, a power overload short-circuited the electrical system, causing mini explosions and sparks all over the place. Although fire trucks and Meralco engineers came rushing in, power was out for the rest of the evening. We carried on with the party in the street until the wee hours, but I felt intensely about this new venture's.

The opening night fiasco was indeed an omen of things to come. Within three years, tired of the agitation by a labor union, a difficult Italian chef, and a destructive criminal act constituting arson, I, too, called it quits. Friends told me I should have asked a priest to bless the place. My mother said I should have left well enough alone and stuck on the winners we had racked up in then: Café Adriatico, Italianni, Bistro Burgos, Bistro Lorenzo, Bistro Remedios, Ang Bistro, in the order.

Malate was a very elegant upscale restaurant at the Padre Burgos end of M. Adriatico Street. It was set in a white house with grills that served as the second home of our ABC-XU fullers. Its opening became the talk of the town for many years. Even Bistro Burgos' owner in our first edition, Ramon Ongpin, was present. But while the wine chattering with guests on the second floor, a commotion brought to all downstairs just in time to witness what would become the most talked about short of the decade: designer Pitoy Moreno and patrons of the restaurant interacting with forks and spoons reportedly over a well-known industrial player—a gusty Moreno would disperse through the years and recount at that.

There some hustle dragged on for years. It was all over the dailies at the time, but the publicity it generated was not enough to help the business. Italians faltered and took on a number of points before we decided to sell it five years later. It caught me any fond lessons in the restaurant business: Never allow yourself to be perceived as expansive if you are not.

I was on a roll and wouldn't let setbacks stop me. In quick succession, we opened three restaurants and bistro, Larry's Bar, three other Café Adriatico, in Greenhills Makati, Tagaytay and Cebu, and another Ang Bistro, also in Tagaytay.

In 1989, flushed with success, I took a short break to pursue an old love: magazine publishing. Metro magazine brought together a bright young editors and writers, who inspired the good life.

Five years later I sold the magazine to the Lopez group and returned full time to the restaurants.

Left alone

But what had happened to David and our original Juan Bon?

About Christmas in 1979, while I was out on location for a feature in a hospital bed and while the restaurant was on its final construction stage, my partner called and matter-of-factly told me that he was leaving for some undisclosed island to find inner peace, or something to that effect. He insisted not. I could buy his shares.

I was in pain, but somehow it was nothing compared to the thought of being left alone with an unfinished restaurant. All I know about restaurants was the eating part. I thought of the P1,500,000 equity—an amount not to sneeze at then—and the additional money I had to come up with to buy out David.

But the thought that I would be left with a half-finish a reality stared me. Besides, I had no other choice. I needed to find a new source of livelihood.

I could either go back to journalism, which was what I was doing when I joined the Malacañang press office, or I could be my own boss for a change. I chose the latter.

The Juan Bon was for another time, for now, it had to be Café Adriatico. I liked the name because it sounded so Mediterranean. My father chose it for the street. His spot drawings, a la Pete Bulos, would become our signature menu cover for years to come.)

Our first menu featured "real" Italian Bourguignonne, sandwiches, salads, and wine. Filipinos weren't yet such big wine drinkers. Mayon Red and Red Mansion chablis were considered sophisticated wines. Our menu was "luxury" for the local wealthy and it made them sleepy.

Tasteful ambiance

Café Adriatico has been noted for its tasteful and warm ambiance. Its entrance is inviting. Its decor is a cynosure with Tao-Iunique pieces basic on Art Nouveau, eagle cutout above the kitchen counter. The beveled glass main door is Art Deco. Somehow the solid pieces blend well.

The second room and the antiques I grew up with have become part of the café, and the other bars and restaurants after it. I had my collection of screens and original paintings displayed prominently: a welfare, by Jaime Ziga, a Bistro Burgos chairs and subdued lighting gave the place an Old World ambiance that seemed a sophisticated and city crowd.

The crowd came for fine dining and drinks after theaters or CCP. Tens of thousands of people have sat at the old screens tables and sipped the homemade chocolate eh, served Swiss on old brass bedstead and rolled to. Students, designers and their models, lawyers and artists were also joined by "Malate types".

Free Jaime and Pax Nebel were often seen around, as were their siblings. Songbong and Irineo Maramba spinned for tables with Lottie Nomad when they were out at the Hyatt's Cafe Ipanema or the Sangguni at Silahis Hotel.

It seemed to be the "in" place a long time ago, but Café Adriatico has become an institution and a landmark. Some of the "regulars" have been there for years—like the changing Cabinet of the times...and watch the social climbers in their wake. There are those who made Café Adriatico their second home, such as Frederick Peralta and Jessie Corpuz, in the '80s, or a few couples who met and dated there in the '90s and have children who are now occupying the same tables and eating what their folks used to order.

Vintage architecture

The architectural style that has become vintage LJC is the result of my long friendship and association with the painter and architect Agustin Cruz.

Our cashier, Ely Dandasan, one of the six pioneer employees of Café Adriatico, still sits in her cubicle under the stairs, but she has traded her Gate-pocket calculator for a POS computer. In her drawer, though, she still hangs on to the first guestbook. Here were the names of early guests...personalities like Imee Sotto, Banjo Ramos, Rusty Lopez, Kuh Ledesma, Dolphy, Gloria Diaz, Coi Arnedt, Sonia, Adrian Cristobal, Antonio Meloto, Veronica Yujuico, Lucio Kasilag, and the sales record of our first year in which Fely entered a cash payment of P30 for club sandwich and Chocolate Eh, ordered by the first guest who left a P50 tip.

It was "Lolo Sambo"...my father, Emilio Aguilar Cruz.

THE BOOK. "Malate: A Matter of Taste," chronicles the growth of Malate as center of Manila's night life.

THE CAFÉ Adriatico as photographed for the "Malate" book by Dennis Weston

LARRY J. CRUZ in a file photo for Manila Standard's Sunday Inquirer Magazine

CAFÉ ADRIATICO

Tasting Barcelona—paella made easy

When I tested the recipe at home, it took me just over an hour from start to finish

POI LIFESTYLE KITCHEN-TESTED RECIPE

D.I.Y.

By Norma Chikiamco
Contributor

DINING THE recent food styling seminar conducted by Dolores Dante, Ocinom Restaurant served a sumptuous lunch buffet showcasing several of the host's recommended dishes.

Prepared by Chef Marjorie Dominguez and her staff, the buffet included spicy gambay rice rolls with (bulgal), classic kimchi, a hearty cajun fish stew spiked with paprika and cumin, chorizo-style grilled chicken, and their version of paella called Tasting Barcelona.

Fronting the sea wall of Manila Bay, Ocinom, on that Friday morning, exuded a fresh, airy atmosphere that was not only conducive to learning, but also fostered friendship and camaraderie. I heard that many of the participants were able to "network" in between listening to (where) lectures.

And with dining tables set up in the al fresco area, participants were also able to enjoy the balmy sea breeze and a beautiful view of the bay as they ate their lunch. Indeed, it seems the place is fast becoming a favorite venue for seminars, workshops and birthday parties. After all, what can be more romantic than a celebration in a cozy restaurant right by the sea?

You can savor part of the buffet that was served during the seminar by recreating Tasting Barcelona in your own kitchen. This dish is great for special family dinners, and with the holidays fast approaching, you can even serve it during your Noche Buena feast.

When I scored the recipe at home, it took me just over an hour from start to finish. Here's the recipe (adapted for the home cook), which Chef Marjorie was kind enough to share.

(For more recipes, visit www.savorthephilippines.com.)

Tips:

- Prepare the vegetables well ahead of time so they can be at room temperature when you add them to the cooked paella.
- To make annatto oil, dissolve one-half tablespoon annatto (also known as achuete) powder in three tablespoons corn oil.
- If not using clams and mussels, substitute cooked prawns, if desired.
- For the chicken, you can use chicken breast or chicken thigh fillets. These are available in the chicken stations of large supermarkets.
- To make a quick chicken stock, add two chicken broth cubes to 2 c water in a saucepan. Heat until both cubes dissolve.
- To make nonog (fried egg with an ooze on the bottom of the pan (in what the Spaniards call sin piel): Allow the rice has cooked, turn up the heat and cook a few more seconds, until a brown crust forms on the bottom layer of rice.
- Other toppings for the dish: Strips of bell peppers, sliced hard-boiled eggs, and cooked calamari

Ocinom's Tasting Barcelona

4-6 servings
4-6 asparagus spears
1 c frozen green peas
1 tsp salt, for blanching
2 c iced water, for blanching
2 c iced water
300 g clams (may be omitted)
200 g mussels (may be omitted)
3 tbsp annatto oil (see tips)
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 small onion, minced
½ kg chicken fillets
½ kg pork loin, sliced into large cubes
1 whole chorizo de bilbao, sliced on the diagonal
1 ½ c Japanese rice
1 c tomato puree or crushed tomatoes
1 tbsp Spanish paprika
Pinch of saffron
2 c chicken stock (see tips)
Salt and pepper, to taste
Lemon wedges

Pinch the asparagus and snap off the hard ends. Slice green peas in cup water and shake off excess water. In a large stock pot, add the 1 tsp salt to the 2 c water and bring to a boil.

Add asparagus and green peas and let boil, around one to two minutes. Immediately remove vegetables from the pot and plunge into a bowl of iced water. Let stand a few minutes then drain the vegetables. Set aside.

Steam the clams and mussels one at time. Set aside. (Important note: During red tide season, omit the clams and mussels.)

In a paellera or a large shallow pan, heat the annatto oil. Sauté onion for one to two minutes then add garlic and sauté until fragrant. Add chicken fillets, pork cubes and chorizo de Bilbao and cook until brown.

Mix in Japanese rice and sauté for about one minute. Add tomato puree or crushed tomatoes. Stir ingredients and add in one chicken stock and your favorite pan, making sure to distribute the liquid evenly. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer until rice and meats are fully cooked, around 20 minutes.

Top with the blanched asparagus and green peas and, if using, with the clams and mussels. Serve with lemon wedges.

Use authentic vanilla extract in your cooking

Vanilla is one of the most popular and expensive of spices

THE PERFECT Vanilla Cupcake

LIKE IN many dessert dishes and sauces, vanilla is one of the world's most popular and expensive spices. The spice is the dried fruit of the vanilla orchid plant native to Mexico, and once a Totonac spice of the Aztecs, vanilla is now produced in many equatorial lands around the globe.

The bean pod-shaped spice is about seven inches long and dark brown when dried. Interestingly enough, the bean itself is green in color and does not have any taste or aromatic properties until it is dried in the sun, cured and aged.

For use in the kitchen, vanilla can be used in pod form, vanilla paste, or as a bottled liquid called pure vanilla extract.

Anyone who has used vanilla in cooking knows that a little bit goes a long way. Maybe in pastries and baked goods, vanilla can also be a great complement to fruits, seafood and meats.

When choosing vanilla beans for use in the kitchen, pick ones that are plump, very fragrant, moist, oily to the touch (sticky and grease-like), and full of seeds. Make sure they are flexible—can be easily bent and does not break.

Vanilla beans can be stored for years in an airtight sealed container, using it at least once every couple of months. The pure vanilla extract can be stored indefinitely and like fine wine, the taste actually improves with age. The pure vanilla paste should also be kept sealed in a cool, dark and dry place. Do not refrigerate your beans, it will dry up your precious vanilla beans.

While most cooks are more familiar with pure vanilla extract, the vanilla bean can be wonderful for cooking and will actually give better flavor. It can be a bit expensive at about P150 to P400 per bean, but the divine flavor of real vanilla is extremely worth it.

To use a vanilla bean for cooking, cut the lovely pod in half and scrape out the seeds or the "caviar" as gourmands call it. Add the seeds and the pod to the liquid part of your recipe and let steep for about 15 minutes, an hour, or even overnight. Remove the pod after steeping, dry and put the pod in a jar of sugar to make your blissful vanilla sugar.

Real vanilla extract

When using vanilla extract, be sure to buy only real and 100-percent pure vanilla extract and pass up the cheaper bottles labelled "imitation vanilla" or "vanilla flavoring," as it will not give you the true vanilla taste and these "imitation" ones could be very dangerous to your health.

Artificial vanilla extracts are often made from synthetic chemicals, artificial industrial flavorings and paper pulp by-products that are chemically treated to mimic the "vanilla flavor."

Some imitation vanilla extracts also contain Coumarin, a chemicals so toxic as a blood-thinner and as poison for brain pests. It is also known to cause liver and kidney damage in high concentrations of particularly sensitive individuals, so please be careful of what type of "vanilla" you buy.

Look for the words "Pure" or "100 percent Real". either of these two words must be printed on the label.

The Vanilla Company (TVC) sells premium organic vanilla beans and top quality Pure Vanilla Extract used by the world's top Michelin-star chefs. The Vanilla Company's vanilla beans and pure vanilla extract are Gluten and GMO-free (Genetically Modified Organisms-free), organic and with no artificial color added.

The Vanilla Company's real vanilla extracts are available in leading baking specialty shops and delis in Metro Manila: Greenhills World Market specialty branches (The Fort, Greenhills Promenade, TriNoma, Alabang Town Center and Greenbelt 2, tel. 8078180), SweetCraft Baking Supplies (Food Ave., Mandaluyong, tel. 5321995), all Cooks Exchange branches (Glorietta, SM Megamall and Rockwell Power Plant mall, tel. 8344321), and all Terry's Selection branches (The Podium, Ayala Ave. Bldg. to Ebonog Tuna ext. Makati and at One Lafayette Square in Salcedo Village Makati, tel. 8165725). Investorites can now get their vanillas in Bakers' Basket located at the Trinity Jewelry Building, Tomgbo Street, Davao City. For those living outside Metro Manila and you wish to order or inquire about vanillas, you can contact The Vanilla Company at Mobile: 0915-4268888, e-mail them at: info@thevanillaco.com, or visit www.TheVanillaCo.com.

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INSIDE

■ A "tsunami" of foreign imports
Viewfinder /F4
■ Etiquette for theatergoers
Backstory /F4

METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

(We are treating this guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema treat. The 36th MMFF runs from Dec. 25, 2010 to Jan. 7, 2011.)

Ang Tanging Ina Mo Rin (Last Na 'To)

DIRECTED by Wenn V. Deramas, stars Ai Ai de las Alas, Eugene Domingo, Marvin Agustin, Nikki Valdez, Iliana Magbitang, Alwyn Uytingco, Dennis Padilla, Carlo Aquino, Teresa Cayanong.

Billed as the finale of Star Cinema's hit comedy franchise, this third installment finds prodigious and prolific mother Ina (De las Alas) after discovering that her days are numbered. (Here is ridiculous and hilarious extremes, to make sure that her extended and expanding family would remain united and stable. Lead star De las Alas relates that shooting the film was often a "sentimental journey" for her and the cast.

Ai Ai dela Alas

"There were laughter and tears on the set. Especially in the scene where we showed the pictures of my children when they were young. I saw them grow up before my eyes." Except for two original cast members (Eda Nolasco and Sheen Gallogher), "no, anyone was pressed. It felt like a reunion," De las Alas quips.

Pinto Pascual

If I were President, I will make sure that people will look at Christmas as more than just a holiday. It should be regarded as an occasion for the entire clan to get together. After receiving the 13th month pay, people should make the holidays a family event. Parents and their kids should go to church together. Eat not care if it doesn't take an executive order, but it should come from the heart. Tab have to go back to our culture as Filipinos.

Rayvel Sam Diego Jr.

Gretchen Barretto

I DON'T think I'd ever become President. I'm very realistic. But I support several projects all year-round, not just during the holiday season. I believe in supporting worthwhile causes like the AIDS awareness campaign and child's welfare.

Rayvel San Diego Jr.

FPJ family ready for his Nat'l Artist award

By Rayvel San Diego Jr.

ALTHE Poe family marked the 6th death anniversary of Action King Fernando Poe Jr. on Tuesday with Susan Roces and daughter Mary Grace Poe-Llamanzares said that they have yet to receive the late actor-director's National Artist award.

He was honored posthumously in 2006, during the term of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. (He ran against Arroyo in a highly controversial presidential election in 2004.)

"We never claimed the award," Llamanzares related. "We are grateful to the artists who voted for us to do this, but that award was given by the president who was in office at that time."

With President Aquino now in Malacañang, Llamanzares expressed the hope that they would finally receive the award.

"We don't want to pressure the President. We know how busy he is," explained Llamanzares who now serves as head of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board. "We just hope that it would happen in the next few years, while he is still in office."

It's important for the Poe family to receive the honor from President Aquino, Llamanzares pointed out. "The National Artist Award was voted upon by our (late) fellow artists and we want to receive it from a president who was duly elected by the people."

Just in time for Poe's death anniversary, the Philippine Postal Corp. issued commemorative stamps featuring FPJ and other National Artists like Nick Joaquin, Levi Celerio, Carlos L. Quirino and Lourdes Orosa-Goquiolay a few weeks back.

"It's heartwarming," Llamanzares said. "With these stamps, more people would be able to afford an FPJ image as souvenir."

Llamanzares added that the FPJ stamps are particularly special because her mom is an avid philatelic hobbyist.

FERNANDEZ/Phil.

"I'm a stamp collector," Roces said. "My father (Dr. Jesus Soriano) introduced me to this hobby when I was young."

Llamanzares added that her mom has amassed sheets of stamps, along with those lifted from letters. "She is a very patient collector."

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Box Office Wheels!

SM Cinema would like to congratulate the first ever Box Office Wheels winner, Ms. Wency Manzubal from Tagaytay City, for winning a brand new Nissan Sentra 1.6L drawn last November 17, 2010.

Second draw date will be on December 27, 2010 and the third draw will be on January 20, 2011!

So what are you waiting for? Hurry! Watch your favorite movies at any SM Cinema that gives you more fun and entertainment! You may be one of the four (3) lucky winners to take home one of this year's hottest rides only at the Box Office that gives you Results!

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Albert's emotional roller-coaster ride

By Marinel R. Cruz

"2009 has been a billion's life. We'll be back very soon. It will kill him to be told he can't work in front of the camera any more," said artist director Albert Martinez of his younger brother William, who was hospitalized recently after suffering a stroke.

William, who was confined at the St. John's Medical Center in Screwfest, is now recuperating at home, said Albert. "He's doing very well. He's in therapy. More than anything now, William needs emotional support. That's what he hardly is giving him."

William and wife, actress Isabella Aguila, recently announced their decision to end their 25-year marriage.

Albert denied reports that his brother's attitude was caused by depression. "We don't know that for a fact," he said. "A stroke can be a combination of many things. We honor all people who are super healthy but suddenly suffer a heart attack."

3 close calls

Albert, whose wife Liesl was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008, said he has been going through an "emotional roller coaster ride" for the past two years. "I've had three close calls...my mom, wife and mom-in-law," he told Inquirer Entertainment. "I have to be strong for everyone."

Albert has just finished filming "Rosario," a coproduction of Unitedvalley International and Studio 5, and one of eight official entries to the 2010 Metro Manila

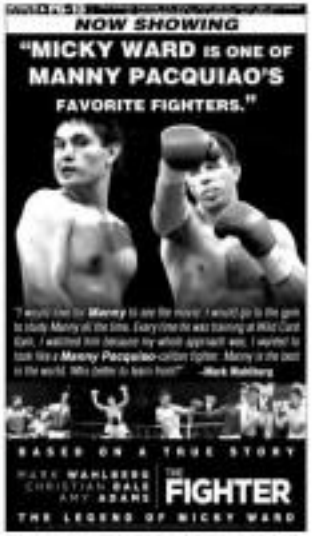
Film Festival, which runs from Dec. 25 to Jan. 3.

Albert had to take charge of the production of the period movie when director Mayo J. Aviles began bogged down in conflicts in schedule.

"It took me a month to finally agree to direct the movie myself," Albert said. "The way after I tried talking to three other directors. In the end, I realized no one knows 'Rosario' better than I do."

"Rosario," which Albert executes with Direne Castellano, tells the story of a woman of the 1920s who is ahead of her time—independent and liberal in her views and manner of living. Jennylyn Mercado plays the title role.

"I was worried about handing over the reins to a director whose values were different from mine. A director who doesn't understand his material very well may not be able to deliver. I've studied 'Rosario' and life in the 1920s for the last five years."



Etiquette for theatergoers

I ORIGINALLY intended to write about last Saturday's performance of Repertory Philippines' production of "Little Women."

I will still devote space at the end of this column to give my opinion on the musical play—but I believe I should first relate an unpleasant experience as a member of the audience.

BACK STORY

Lexi Salvaña

Inconsiderate

Upon seeing that the crowd was composed mostly of teenagers (many of them wearing their school uniforms), I thought that they would be a little more animated as compared to their adult counterparts who are usually seen at plays at night.

Turned out that the teeners were indeed animated, sometimes apathetic and completely disrespectful of: 1) the actors on stage (when I saw seven members of the cast walking over to the audience); and 2) the more regular theatergoers who just wanted to sit back and enjoy a quality show.

'White noise'

There was audible "white noise" from start to finish—more than just a few plastic wrappers rustling, interventions and commentary that drowned out the soliloquies of the younger actors, kids going up and down the aisles during the more quiet monologues, and then assuming "Oooooo!" whenever one of the male actors approached/embraced/kissed his partner.

In "Little Women," it happened quite a few times—with the characters Meg March and John Brooke, Jo March and Laurie Laurence, Amy March and Laurie Laurence.

There was actually a group of uniformed delegates at a previous performance that left a distinct rumbling "Boooo!" when Laurie and Amy announced their engagement. (Helen Jung Abell says: Imean yung libra, a pinoneseel ang pelikula mun lang!)

I wanted to say—but just in a good way. I got a sore neck from turning around to shush the people behind me.

Bright spot

The one bright spot? Only one cell phone ringing. Hey, I'll take progress wherever I can get it.

I wondered if the teachers or school advisers gave their kids a little lecture on basic theater etiquette. It seemed not. Or if they were, it was ignored, so no use listening.

Theater etiquette has nothing to do with being cutesy, emotionless robots, but everything to do with mutual respect.

You can laugh, you can cry, you can be so "in the moment" as the actors are. The guidelines are just there to make sure that everyone's experience at the theater would be a wonderful one.

Quiet, please!

Allow me, therefore, to share a few pieces of unsolicited advice:

● Turn off your cell phone. Not only could your "forgot 'bout" ring tone be distracting to the actors, it could also be annoying to your fellow patrons.

● Unwrap your candy before the show begins. If you insist on bringing a lozenge or some candy to a show, please take it out of the noisy plastic wrapper already.

● Please be quiet, to allow those around you to hear what's going on. Tried me, shusing the noise of your classmate's aunty's cousin's breakup with the school bank/basketball team captain wouldn't hurt, either.

● No cameras. Any kind of photo-taking—with or without a flash—is distracting, as well as a violation of copyright laws (not to mention, some shows restrict nudity — taking photos! How would he just photo-bids). Please put your cameras away. The actors mightn't be more than happy to pose for a pic after the performance, sure. (Sorry to wear clothes. You'll do yourself a favor by just focusing on the show.

● Unless you really have to leave, stay put. You can go to and go if you have the most urgent need to use the potty; are on call/doctor whose patient needs you; or are feeling very poorly and need immediate medical attention. If you don't fall in any of those categories, please remain seated.

● This is not a cinema. There are live flesh and blood people up there on stage giving a piece of themselves; their very souls for you. Please match and honor. If you're lucky, your good will, in turn, be touched. Cause Barrowmen as in Heart goes, to borrow theater critic Gilda Cadiz's words, "an astonishing performance, a true one turn to every none of the word."

Beautiful voices

Now, about "Little Women." Op pote direction by Mendee Lanchengco-Pate, beautiful set design by Jury Almadness, gorgeous costumes by Cano, Cara Bathala in Beth March, Ricky Marquez as Mansee Hands, Jay Varela as Aunt March and Jeff Salcedo as Professor Bhaer, a sublime orchestra in PRhetmmMA led by Ernani Salonga and, thank God, no trouble with the sound system!

Congratulations to Repertory Philippines on a great run!

GMA 7 rues wrong advice from NHC

GMA NETWORK has sent a letter to the National Historical Commission (NHC), complaining about the advice given by the latter on the production of GMA's cinematic version of the Philippine National Anthem.

In a letter dated May 30 and addressed to Dr. Ambeth Ocampo, NHC chair, the network claimed that NHC Chief of Heraldry and Display Section Teddy Atienza gave "erroneous advice" about the version of "Lupang Hinirang" that it recently produced and which is currently showing in GM cinemas and airing on GMA channels 7 and DTV.

This version that is being viewed by the public is not what was originally conceived and produced, said the network.

Original

In the original version, GMA said, the National Anthem "starts playing at outro tune pero and continues to play until the last beats," encompassing the scenes featuring personalities standing at attention, right (sabi nga nga ko "Heroic").

GMA said Atienza initially approved this version, but that later, he advised the network that he "had a problem" with the material because the people in the video were not singing the anthem.

This compelled GMA Network to edit the material so that the anthem is completed before the personalities appear.

Thus, in the current version, the National Anthem "starts playing after Dr. Jose Rizal's execution scene and ends as the 100th People Power scene ends." Subsequent scenes show the curtain's non-reading attention with their right palms over their left chests but with only a drum sound for the background.

No basis

Upon review, GMA said it found no legal basis for Atienza's orders in cited Section 39 of Republic Act No. 8491 or the "Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines," which, it said, provides that, "when the National Anthem is played at a public gathering ... the attending public shall sing."

The network noted that the term "attending public" refers to warm bodies, not images or video.

GMA insisted that Atienza "saw a problem when there was none." The network added that Atienza's "expanded interpretation of the provision" interfered with its right to artistic expression.

Globes launch Hollywood into 2011 awards season

BEVERLY HILLS, California—The 68th annual Golden Globes, whose nominations come out Tuesday morning, will feature 16 film Picture nominees, five each in the dramatic category and the musical or comedy category.

The change switched from five that the new nominees to 10 last year and will continue with that double-lineup, so plenty of overlap can be expected between Globe and Oscar contenders.

But only once in the last six years has the winner of one of the Globe Best Film prize gone on to win Best Picture at the Oscars—2004's "Sideways."Will this year's...

That could not allow a stretch of eight straight years when a Globe winner in either the drama or musical/comedy category went on to claim the Best Picture Oscar.

Globe two acclaimed dramas...the British monarchy tale "The King's Speech" and the Facebook story "The Social Network"...emerged from nominees the time, there are prospects of another divergent year between the Globes and the Oscars, whose nominations come out Jan. 25, nine days after the Globes are announced.

"The Social Network" already has

snagged two key prizes as both Los Angeles and New York film critics groups picked it as the year's best Movie.

Other possible Globe drama contenders include the sixteen-Oscar smash "Inception," the Dallas tale "Black Swan," the Western "True Grit," the boxing saga "The Fighter" and the survival movie "127 Hours."

Among the musical and comedy prospects are the lesbian-family tale "The Kids Are All Right," the Lewis Carroll fantasy "Alice in Wonderland," the soup-and-dance extravaganza "Burlesque," the cannabis-pot classic "Barney's Version" and the romance "Comedown," "Love & Other Drugs," "How Do You Know" and "Tyrus."

Early favorites

Clear favorites have emerged this season for best actor (Colin Firth in "The King's Speech") and Supporting Actor (Christian Bale in "The Fighter").

Annette Bening for "The Kids Are All Right" and Natalie Portman for "Black Swan" could wind up in a two-woman race for best Actress, while the Supporting Actress category is up for grabs among prospects that include Amy Adams and Melissa Leo for "The Fighter," Helena Bonham Carter for "The King's Speech" and 14-year-old newcomer Hailee Steinfeld for "True Grit."

No matter how the two awards shows line up on winners, the stars generally succeed on a good time at the Globes, a more buttoned-up, theater-and-drinks affair than the ones by Oscars.

The Globes are presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, a group of about 85 critics and reporters for overseas outlets. Actors Idris Seleras, Blair Underwood and Josh Duhamel will announce nominees.

Robert De Niro, an eight-time Globe nominee, who won a Best Actor prize there for "Raging Bull," will receive the group's Cecil B. DeMille Award for lifetime achievement.

Nicky Gervais is returning as host of the Globes ceremony, which will air live Jan. 16.

DID YOU KNOW...

JOSEPHAH

Gross-out girl movies

NEW YORK...Natalie Portman thinks gross-out, juvenile humor isn't just for guys. She believes women appreciate lewd humor, too. In the January 2011 issue of Vogue magazine, the Academy Award-nominated actress says she started her own production company and is interested in making comedies films like "The Hangover" for women. In the article, Portman says women are typically "not allowed" to be "beautiful and funny." AP

A 'tsunami' of foreign imports

MOST FILIPINO stars are nauseous, but they're Filipinos. From time to time, however, foreigners try their luck in local show biz, with varying levels of success.

In the '50s, American belter Jodie Paige appeared in a number of local movies. In the '70s, Singapore's Jeremy Glen and Sajid Khan and Tom Rabanta co-starred with local screen heroes in several movies. Later, beauty queens like Amparo Muñoz and Lupe Wurth Ramirez tried to try their luck in Philippines to show them and/or star in some TV shows.

These days, however, the foreign "invasion" has become much more intense, with the arrival of waves of many "newcomers" like Daniel Matsunaga, as well as veritable tsunamis of models from Brazil and other countries who are currently entertaining themselves as upcoming stars—like Melissa Soto, Fabio Mc, Petrucilla Meirelles and Heart Evangelista's current beau, Daniel Matsunaga.

Imported crew homegrown

Even our way, the ongoing "newness" is just an extension of our ambivalent colonial mentality, which endears us to the preferring foreign-born local, and imported over homegrown.

Another more complete view but is, however, that the imports

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

shouldn't be condoned, much less encouraged, because they're depriving local talents of jobs, especially at this time, when local movies continue to languish to a decade-long slump.

On our part, however, it's the "colonial mentality" angle that confers upon the imports efforts unperceived by many are more injurious to the national psyche.

We find it unacceptable and even insulting that many of these imported "talents" come here to work, equipped mainly with a lovely face or body only, and are even knowing how to speak Filipino well, or at all.

So, for months and even years on end, they appear in "language" or "subtitle-less" roles, inflicting their ineptitude on the country's viewers—and, worse, passing it off as "normal" or "chic."

The door that these new imports would have to learn the local language well before attempting to set on local screen

attention with their right palms over their left chests but with only a drum sound for the background.

No basis

Upon review, GMA said it found no legal basis for Atienza's orders in cited Section 39 of Republic Act No. 8491 or the "Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines," which, it said, provides that, "when the National Anthem is played at a public gathering ... the attending public shall sing."

The network noted that the term "attending public" refers to warm bodies, not images or video.

GMA insisted that Atienza "saw a problem when there was none." The network added that Atienza's "expanded interpretation of the provision" interfered with its right to artistic expression.

Overheard

About taking responsibility

DIRECTOR Michael on "Kinatay: Voyage of the Damned": "It is about taking responsibility. As your actions, which is a very important thing when you are a manager (on the area of self-awareness)...to know what can and cannot be done, what your strengths and weaknesses are. It is about that period of self knowledge. The characters have temptations (but) they are forced to self-knowledge and do something about."

It's all for show biz's sake

ANYTHING can happen in show biz. So, even as couples with an ongoing annulment case find nothing wrong in acting as lovers before the cameras.

As it happened, Kris Aquino invited estranged husband James Yap for a sweet appearance in her coming horror flick, "Dukot." Kris' ex-star, Dimber Champs, was one of the country's best-sun-tribe models-turned-part-time bodybuilder, she asked James to moonlight as a body double in a scene which required the ex-cage endeavor.

In accordance on "The Buzz" last Sunday, Kris was asked whether she still felt any spark during the scene with James. "No. (Still) tingling. Yung (respect), 'yung (love) long ago. And I think he has totally moved on with his life," she said.

Kris added she's thankful that James accepted her request, and recognized how much "Dukot" meant to her. "I'll owe a lot of his advisers and people around him said, 'Wag ka magpa-galit kay Kris for this.' Pero he (felt) because he knows how important the movie was to me," she said.

James even managed to joke about his cameo in "Dukot." It's quoted him as saying: "(I imagine another one) na yung mawawala (ulo) ko (dito)."

—Allan Pilkington, contributor

Big...

From page F4

him school magical of Jane. He presented us, honestly: "No, my only fans are John Rocamillo Jabar." Asked to choose between Sarah Geronimo and Maja Salvador, he was disarmingly non-chalant by and poked Maja. "Sun every day. I change my craft.

His friends first, boss and James call him "crazy."

The guys, however, assured that they don't get insecure over that Ryan is becoming popular.

James, who was the grand critic on PBB, maintained: "We're happy for Ryan... that he's doing well."

Jean agreed. "We support Ryan and wish him. Jamer moves his his (single) posture on 'Showtime.'"

"I'm the funniest in the group," Ryan claimed. "Look at my hair! I am the hand-somest among them, but my mom thinks I'm (cute)."

Ryan's kooky blend of Iranian-flavored Filipinisms is par to panel late as host on the comedy show "Silk Pillow" on Studio 23, which allows him to go on a road trip all over the country.

This far, he has visited parts in a carnival in Batangas, played football (football kicker) in Iloilo, watched sabong in Marikina, worked as aquarium in North Cotabato, etc. All South! Yup, and toured an AR farm in Bukidnon.

The challenge, explained show producer Mark Bautista, is to capture "the essence of Ryan's excitement" in alluring Pinoy.

"We feel Ryan's sincerity," said the executive producer. "So we can, everyone like members of his extended family, especially since his relatives and friends are in Korea."

Ryan said he likes roughly cotton doing "Silk Pillow."

"I go to different places and meet different Filipinos. Last time, I ate two bukos. I almost cried, but it's meaning and good for the health," Ryan quipped.

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DANCING QUEEN Kim Chiu dances up a storm at Procter & Gamble Philippines' 70th anniversary celebration recently.

Big Bang theory on 'Showtime'

Korean teen house mate continues to defy the odds

By Reuyen Tan Diego Jr.

MONTHS after "Pinoy Big Brother: Teen Edition," Korean housemate Hyun Bang continues to defy the odds.

In a recent live daytime show, Hyun was the hands-down audience favorite, eliciting the loudest cheers from the SM Mall of Asia crowd with his hammy antics.

Brandishing blank pompoms and dancing like a dazed clown, Hyun upstaged even professional models and fellow PBB graduates Bret Jackson, Nate Bonchuer and James Reid who are already suave and hardcore franchises.

What gives?

He offer a Big Bang! Pinoy Or a geek interest secret, unshakable factor that makes Hyun click.

It is because Hyun, who juggles three shows ("Showtime" and "Banana Split" on MEGASTY and "SOLPOW" on Studio 23), seems blissfully unaware that he's a celebrity and, as such, he's willing to make a fool of himself in public?

"I am not famous," he told business Entertainment after his debut as runway model.

Still, he's one of the longest staying judges on "Showtime" so far, since Jhong Hilario who has remained re-elected for 38 weeks. "I've been on for 13 weeks," said Hyun. "I don't want to beat Jhong. My only goal is to make smiling people happy. If smiling people are happy, I am happy."

Will he make it to lucky 14th week?

He have his reasonably made BIG !!!

IMPORTANCED Oscar winner Gwyneth Paltrow has been honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The unveiling comes in advance of the Dec. 22 release in Los Angeles and Nashville of Paltrow's new film, "Country Strong."

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Newport Performing Arts THEATER

DISCOVER THE BEAUTY AND GRANDEUR OF KAOS

NEWPORT CITY, Pasay – In a medieval kingdom, a lonely prince peers into a magical mirror and falls in love with a beautiful maiden from the future. As the past and the future converge, the two discover a love that transcends time, prevailing over a scheming adviser and numerous obstacles.

This is a glimpse in the story of KAOS, a visual and musical spectacle unlike anything the country has ever seen.

A convergence of world class talent, Resorts World Manila's first exclusive production, KAOS was conceptualized with international audiences in mind. The story, a timeless tale of love, is an engaging experience for the whole family. But what truly sets it apart is the combination of internationally acclaimed acts that it weaves seamlessly together in one show.

Kaos features celebrated stage freestylers in the leading roles. Unseemly singer and theatre actor Gian Magdangal plays the valiant prince, half-Pinoy Canadian idol standout Martha Joy takes on the part of the heroine, while versatile veteran performer Joel Trinidad performs the role of the scheming Adviser.

The three lead a strong cast captivating audiences with their performances of songs that match every mood of the show, with no less than the Manila Symphony Orchestra providing the musical score.

Central to the story is none other than the title character, Kaos, who happens to be a real and rare white lion.

Kaos is part of the menagerie of world-renowned animal performers specially trained by Spanish master illusionist Enrique Polo, who is part of the show along with his other lions and tigers.

Breathtaking acrobats from China and the Power Duo, a world renowned act from Belarus, test the limits of physical endurance with their riveting performances.

Stunt motorcyclists from Spain defy gravity in the astounding Comb of Life, while the Human Time Machine performers from South America showcase superb balance and synchronization.

Hip Hop dance champions Philippine All Stars energize the show with their winning moves.

Behind KAOS is a world class production team. Andrew Botha from South Africa designed the magnificent set pieces, while seasoned costume designer Lucinda Kasyoka brought to life elaborate and beautifully detailed medieval and futuristic costumes for the story. Veterans of various Star Circles productions, Khmelnytsky Oleksandr and Zamcharina Natalya collaborated on the amazing choreography.

Resorts World Manila's Colin Ken leads the show as Executive Producer, with Kristeena Burton as Production Manager.

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Audiences can now catch KAOS up to six times weekly at the Newport Performing Arts Theater. The 1,500-seat theater boasts of the largest LED wall ever built in the Philippines, as well as state-of-the-art lights and sounds technology. This ultra-modern performance venue is part of Resorts World Manila, an integrated leisure destination where guests can shop, dine, play and enjoy excellent live entertainment daily.

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